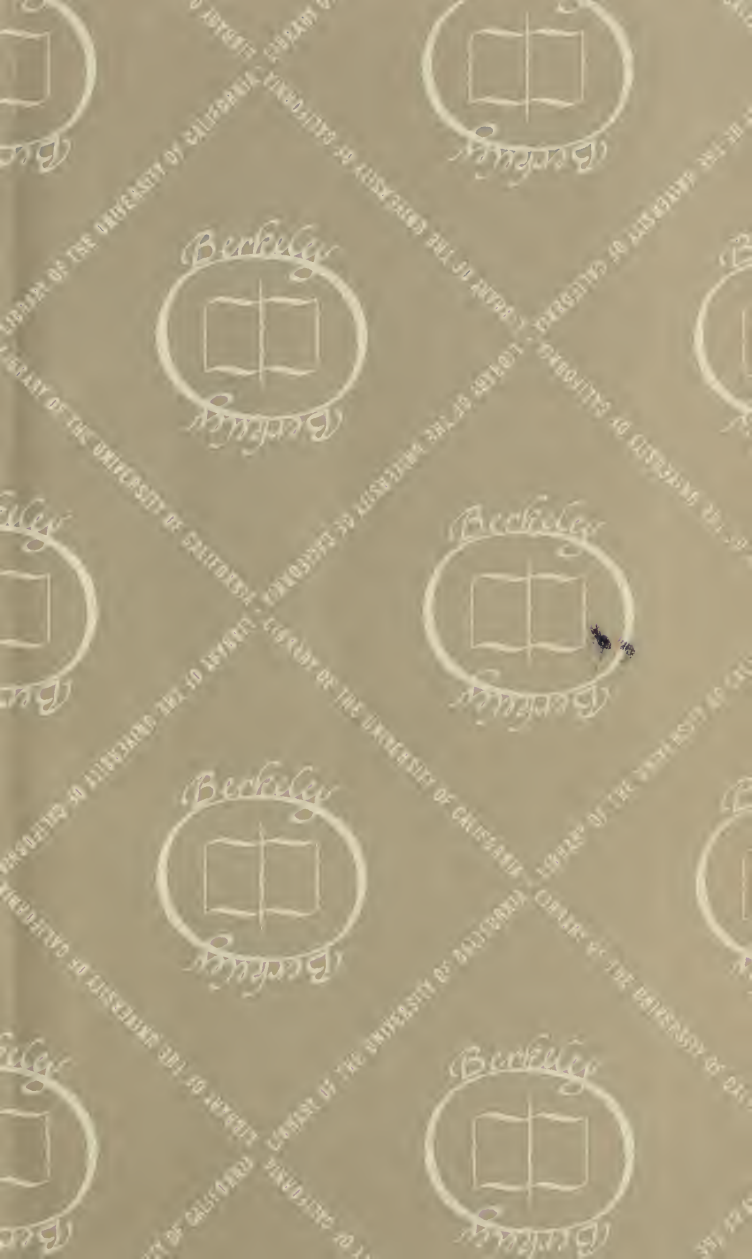
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MARGARET PERCIVAL

IN

AMERICA:

A TALE.

EDITED BY A NEW ENGLAND MINISTER,

A. B.

BEING A SEQUEL TO

MARGARET PERCIVAL:

A TALE.

EDITED BY REV. WILLIAM SEWELL,

B. A.

BOSTON:
PHILLIPS, SAMPSON & COMPANY.
1850.

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PREFACE.

A HOST of English books, called "Religious Novels," have been transplanted into this country, and reprinted, "without note or comment."

It is to be hoped that they have done our young people some good. But it is certain that, in our parish and Sabbath-school libraries, they have greatly puzzled those who read, by their obstinate adherence to close sectarian usages, and by their utter ignorance of the generous spirit which exists in America between Christians of different names.

It would be a pity if our young friends forgot, that, as Christians here, they have duties and opportunities too lofty to be risked, too precious to be thrown away, by the accidental suggestions of any insular literature, — of any isolated ecclesiastical arrangement.

Indeed, we have thought it a pity that the heroes and heroines of these novels had not suspected something of this, themselves, as they might have done, with a wider field for their religious experience.

And so we brought Margaret Percival to Fairmeadow, to enlarge hers. We have tried to do this so as not to pain her especial admirers. We felt that, in the old picture, we had not justice done us. Now that we hold the paint-brush, we have tried to serve them better.

We are sorry, if we have failed.

Carroll County, July, 1850.

MARGARET PERCIVAL IN AMERICA.

CHAPTER I.

"I HAVE passed a most quiet Sunday. The day has been very beautiful and peaceful. I sat behind the house, beneath the horse-chestnut, and collected our favorite books around me, and everything was calm and lovely there. I wished that you were with me; and, indeed, quite pitied you, Anna. One's quiet thoughts are often so disturbed in a country church, or in any church! Either the preacher is irreverential, or the people are more so. One's next neighbor goes to sleep, or the child in the pew in front makes up faces at one."

"I assure you, none of these things disturbed me to-day. I, all the time, was wishing you might hear Mr. Harrod's sermon. I should have liked to talk it over with you. Then, all the congregation were equally interested, and listened devoutly. I would not have lost the service, for many hours under the horse-chestnut tree."

"Perhaps, Anna, you would not have sympathized in what I was reading. I finished Margaret Percival; and I am only more desirous to know something about her, — if she were a real person, how the world turned out with her. I have brought Margaret Percival with me, and shall insist upon your finishing the book, during my visit with you."

"I will take it up again, for your sake. I was, indeed,

somewhat interested in the book. But I cannot believe Margaret Percival really to have existed. There are great inconsistencies in her character. I was very much interested in the way she went to work with her younger brothers and sisters — in her earnestness in regard to all her duties. Now, I could not reconcile this with the great weaknesses she is supposed to show. I laid down the book at that part where she is in great trouble — her father just dying, and the family suffering under many trials. These are nothing to what she is suffering inwardly; for she is going through great spiritual trouble of the heart. It seemed to me very unnatural, that, at such a time, her sorest trouble should be, what words of prayer she should use towards God. That she should have been bowed down by doubt, uncertainty, and humility, towards God, I could understand. But that then she should puzzle herself as to what liturgy she should use, when the soul must needs prompt the words of that first of Christian prayers, — 'My God, be merciful to me a sinner!'"

"But, Anna, I am deeply interested in Margaret. Her life has helped to arouse me. Beneath the chestnut-tree, to-day, I formed many resolutions, such as no church service has ever awakened in me. Tell me, do you not think there may be truer worship, truer self-consecration, in such solitude, than in the most lofty church?"

"I remember feeling this most strongly, Gertrude, at one time, when I was recovering from a long illness. I was left at home, alone, on Sundays. After the sound had died away of the carriage that bore my father and mother to church, there was nothing to awaken the silence, but the distant village church-bells. I would sit at my quiet window, which you shall soon see, and learn to love. I read my favorite books. It was then I acquired my passion for

Fenelon. It was then I read some of the most beautiful of Martineau's sermons. I felt, at the time, that I never before had experienced the truly holy feeling of Sunday."

"It is in such a way I would like to pass my Sundays, in solitary devotion."

"But with me, Gertrude, this did not last. In a few weeks I found myself taking up other occupations for my Sundays. I began by copying poetry for my friends, by writing letters, till I found presently there was growing to be very little difference between my Sundays and my quieter week-days.

"Then came the first Sunday that I could bear the fatigue of going to church. As we passed over this beautiful road we are going over now, my mind prepared itself for the church services. I cannot tell you how powerful were the devout feelings that rose up within me, as I entered the church. Our little choir seemed to offer most devotional strains of music. It was so pleasant to see the well-known faces again! Even the half-quieted glances of the children had something angelic in them. Then the minister's voice roused me again, and recalled to me that I had been in danger of letting my spiritual thoughts slumber and sleep on the holy day, and that I did indeed need the suggestions of an uttered human voice to awaken me. How beautiful were the words of the text that day, — 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'"

"Your quietness before had brought you into the right mood for this public worship."

"I believe now in the power, and the necessity too, of creating such a mood. The hour before church cannot be better employed; and can succeed in throwing over the dullest of preachers an air of earnestness, that touches our

hearts, which, in the church where our thoughts are associated times of devotion, are easily warmed.

"I am sure, also," added Anna, smiling, "that this effect upon me was not merely an intellectual effect, produced by the special power of the preacher. For it was one of the last times that our poor Mr. Pendexter preached here.

"But, Gertrude, now we are drawing near our home, and we must not talk too earnestly to forget to look at our beautiful landscape. I feel that it begins to be mine, now. We are to come down now the hill we have been so long winding up from the village. See how abrupt the bank is at our side! Look at the river, flowing rapidly through the meadows! Those dark, forest-covered mountains, that rise so suddenly from the edge of the river, will seem like old friends, before you have been with us long. This point of land stretching into the river, where, as you will presently see, the house is concealed, hides from us the factory village."

Anna Wilkie and Gertrude Ashton were seated together in the back seat of a wagon, winding down one of the beautiful hills that almost surrounded Fairmeadow. Gertrude was recovering from a long illness; and Anna, with her father and mother, were taking her to their home, where she might feel the influence of the bracing mountain air. They had stopped for Gertrude, after the church services of the day.

The young people would have been surprised, if they had known that one subject of their conversation was, at the same time, on the lips of Mr. and Mrs. Wilkie, as they sat in the front seat of the carriage.

Mr. Wilkie had been absent, for a week or two, when Mr. Harrod had preached at Fairmeadow before; — since

his return, Mr. Harrod had been away, — and, in consequence, Mr. Wilkie had, till to-day, never seen this new preacher, who was to supply Mr. Kavanagh's place, during his European journey. He and his wife had fallen, on this account, into a conversation, even more prolonged and earnest than usual, upon the service of the day, when, in reply to something which he said, on mutual generosity between Christians of various forms, his wife said,

"That reminds me of what Mrs. Brackett told me, at home, about Margaret Percival. It seems she is a real person, after all."

"Pray, who is Margaret Percival? My Sunday-school boys have been talking to me, for months, about Margaret Percival; but I thought it was a book — a novel."

"Did you not notice it, when Anna was reading it? It is a book. Till to-day, I have always supposed it a fictitious work; for there are some marked enough inconsistencies in character in it."

Her husband laughed. "That is spoken like the simple, unsuspicious little Anna of twenty-five years ago. Some of us have seen enough of people and things, since, to know that some very inconsistent characters live, and move, and breathe, and eat dinner, every day.

"Be that as it may, Margaret Percival and her difficulties have taken my boys' hearts by storm. Was not she a persecuted Catholic?"

"Not at all. You have the story upside down. She was a member of the English established church. She fell in with some brilliant, vivid sort of people, Catholics. They tried to convert her. Meanwhile the poor child had some terrible experiences at home, which she went through bravely, and which I think the most interesting parts of her life."

"No? And did they convert her? — these Catholics, — Roman Catholics, of course, you mean."

"Almost, but not quite. Just at the juncture, — that is what makes it seem like a novel, — her uncle appears, — quite a stalwart knight, in his way, an 'English clergyman,' and drags her back from danger; — she leaves her friends and their faith forever."

"Then it is a book of argument, aimed against authority in matters of faith," said Mr. Wilkie, more interested.

"Why, *not* exactly; — no," said she, hesitating. "You must read it yourself. It is aimed at the Pope's authority. When I thought it a romance, I supposed it grew out of the Newman tendency in England. Perhaps that is the reason they published it when they did. It brings the authority of an English clergyman against that of a Roman."

"Then comes the tug of war."

"Yes; but do not laugh. Read the book, and I know you will be interested in it."

CHAPTER II.

The road, after its steep descent from the hill-side, took its course through the valley, along the bank of the river. The mountain, meanwhile, receded from the river, leaving between a broad space sufficiently varied with valley land and higher rocky ground; this was occupied by Mr. Wilkie's house and farm. The greatest advantage was taken of every nook, among the rocks and knolls, for cultivation, and the lower land showed broad fields of grain. The house stood directly under the mountain, and a quiet lane led from the road, towards it, through the thick woods.

This lane wound along the mountain, among the forest trees, and the wild-flowers grew fearlessly on each side. There was no broad view from the house, nor from Anna's favorite porch, which opened upon a small garden behind the house. Opposite, rose up the precipitous side of the mountain, and the little garden was hemmed in by shrubbery. Anna liked it, for the utter quiet that reigned there; even the bee-hive in the corner sent forth a lulling sound, that invited repose. She found it a place where she might sit and read, without interruption of outward exciting objects. It was not so pleasing to Gertrude, who fancied the silence might be almost oppressive, if one sat long alone there.

It was not till the next day, in the evening, that Anna was able to lead Gertrude to her other favorite place of resort. A heavy rain had compelled them to stay all day in the house. They had amused themselves with quiet occupations, and had read and discussed Gertrude's favorite book, Margaret Percival. But now the clouds were breaking away, and Anna and Gertrude hastened to clamber up the mountain side, to see the glorious sunset which was promised. A wild path led upwards from the foot of the garden, through bushes and briars, to a bold rock, which was shaded by an old cedar, and which looked forth upon a magnificent view.

One scarcely knew whether to admire, first, the bold mountain ranges that rose precipitously from the opposite river-side, or the river itself below, winding among the green meadows, or the little brook that hastened to meet it. The village meeting-house stood high among the hills; no one ever knew how it could geographically get into this view; but it always became a part of the landscape, in these mountain regions. It formed a contrast, in its want of

beauty, to the scenery around; but one was soon accustomed to search for it, and love it.

The farm and house below had their share in the beauty of the landscape. The fields of grain and little orchards scattered among the rocky knolls, — the quiet activity of the farm-yard, — the cattle just returned home, standing in picturesque groups, — all these formed together an attractive scene of repose.

"I am, indeed, very grateful for this beautiful view, Gertrude; I call this spot sometimes the Mount of Thankfulness, that I may remind myself to be sufficiently thankful for this sky, and river, and mountain view. I recall to myself, here, the longing I always felt, my long school year, when I was shut up in Boston. I used to think, then, with a sort of envy, of those who were sufficiently happy to live amid such scenes as this. It seemed as if they had such privileges, those

> '— hermits blest and holy maids,
> The nearest heaven on earth,
> Who talk with God in shadowy glades,
> Free from rude care and mirth!'

Do you remember those lines of Keble? And does it not seem as if it ought to be true, that living in the midst of such glorious scenery as this ought to elevate one's mind, and purify one's feelings?"

"One grows sadly accustomed to all such beauty, and forgets to be grateful for such daily blessings."

"Then it would be only necessary to be shut up again, for a while, in a city. Such a longing as would come over me, at times, to see a broad piece of sky! It was so discouraging to see it edged and hemmed in by roofs and chimneys! Then, day after day would follow each other, filled with engrossing cares and amusements, that seemed to shut out

all thoughts of a sky, as much as the roofs and chimneys did. When I suddenly got a chance at a glorious sunset, how it seemed to wake me up again! And when the spring breezes came, how I did wish for a glimpse of river and mountain, then! I am afraid I could never reach the submission and resolution of Miss Barrett. Yet I have always loved those beautiful lines of hers —

'I will have hopes that cannot fade,
For flowers the valley yields;
I will have humble thoughts, instead
Of quiet dewy fields;
My spirit and my God shall be
My seaward hill, my boundless sea.'

I have lived much, Gertrude, on the remembrance of this landscape."

"The mountains and the sea give me a similar longing, a desire to venture out, and see what lies beyond them. Did you never feel an ambition to climb up to the highest of that ridge of mountains, on the other side of the river, and explore the country that must lie on beyond?"

"O yes, I have not only longed, but have tried to reach its summit."

"But what lay beyond, and how could you ever turn back?"

"I ventured up, with a cousin, a little older than myself. She was more adventurous than I, and together we crossed the river, — it was very low then, — on the stones. We set forth in the morning, and took our basket of provisions. The first part of the way, we dallied very much. We were very vigorous in gathering flowers, and we stopped to pick berries; and in one place, we lingered a long while, to admire a beautiful mushroom. It was formed like a peach, and had all its soft, luscious colors. We were so shut in

by the trees as to be able to tell little of the position of the sun, except that we discovered when it was high noon, and then we ate our dinner. So we grew quite unconscious of time, but clambered on higher and higher. For a long time we followed a path; but this grew more and more narrow, till at last we had to find our way among the rocks and underbrush. Presently it began to grow dark in our thick woods; but we pushed on, that we might reach some opening, that we might see what our position might be. We calculated we must have travelled some miles since the morning. I began to grow alarmed; the idea of the other world behind the mountains was very fearful to me, and I dreaded almost to follow Mary's steps, when we reached an opening among the trees, and she led forward to where we heard a rushing sound. It was our own river; we were on that rock that hangs out over the water below, almost directly above the spot where we had set forth in the morning. We had taken a long circuit among the woods, and had been no nearer reaching the summit of Graypeak than we are now. I was never more rejoiced than to see the smoke from the house opposite. We shouted, till Uncle Andrew, in the meadows below, heard us, and came to our rescue."

"Do not such things disappoint you? Don't you wish to be successful, even in little things; and is it not discouraging to be foiled, even in little efforts? O, how often have I wished I might accomplish one little thing in a day! If it is only to be perfect in a song; to make one finished drawing: if it is only that I can say to myself, I have been successful once, in one undertaking!"

"I have felt such wishes; but I am beginning to think I must put them aside, with other childish ambitions, such as that of reaching the top of Graypeak. I begin to feel now

the pleasure I felt then, when I saw my lowly valley-home; a gratification, that my lot is cast in quiet, contented places, and that I am not forced to struggle after mere *success*. I believe it is granted to few men to see it, and never to women."

"But I do not aspire so high as to wish to be famous. I would be satisfied with being *accomplished*. If one could really have one *accomplishment*, — that, indeed, is asking a great deal, — one might command the world, with a perfect voice, or grace, or an artist's power! I would, indeed, rest satisfied, if some day I could say to myself, I have actually, to-day, finished one thing."

"To-day, Gertrude, you must be content to carry away the memory of this sunset sky. See how that bank of clouds has melted away, and what a glorious purple light rests upon the hills! We shall have to leave it all behind, for there comes Uncle Andrew, through the garden, towards the house, and the tea-bell must be heard soon. I wish you had been here in the spring, to see how the columbines skirted this path; but next spring, perhaps you will be here, then — "

"I wish you could tell me where I shall be, and what!"

CHAPTER III.

Gertrude and Anna entered the parlor, where the tea-table was laid. The windows were opened, and the roses and honeysuckles peeped in. The room was plainly furnished; but, for the last two years, it had worn a brighter and more cheerful air. This was since Anna had returned from her school year in Boston. Then the picture of the

battle of Bunker Hill, with its brightly painted red-coats, had given place to a pretty crayon head of a pouting boy, done, with some taste, by Anna herself. There were pretty vases of the last of the garden-flowers scattered around the room, and in the corner, on a small table, stood a small plaster image of Faith. At the door-way, the girls met Uncle Andrew. He had a gentleman with him, whom he introduced as Mr. Newstead. Mr. Newstead had just been visiting the factories, and Uncle Andrew had invited him to come home, and take his supper with the family.

Gertrude shook hands with him. "I have seen you before, Mr. Newstead."

"O yes, in a very different place from this; in a gay party, in Boston."

"And that, Mr. Newstead, was as strange a place for you as this for me. You told me, then, I think, that you had forsworn society and the world."

"It is very true, Miss Ashton; nothing but the hope of meeting an old friend would have led me into such a confusion of tongues. But can you tell me how it is that I find you at home here in the midst of the mountains?"

"It is not a very long story; and now that Miss Wilkie is making you comfortable with a cup of her delicious tea — what, is it possible you can deny yourself so pleasing a luxury?" —

"If Miss Wilkie will allow me, I will make my supper on a dish of baked apples and milk. Nature furnishes my table."

"I am afraid Nature is not always kind enough to bake your apples, Mr. Newstead. But if you must be so abstemious, Gertrude must make up for it, by giving as spirited an account as possible of her wonderful appearance here."

"Mr. Newstead ought not to wonder that I should have been heartily tired of the tumultuous life of Boston, after a long winter, and should have longed for some change, when the spring came. Ah, well! it was some time before I could satisfy myself. In one place there was a house full of noisy children, and in another I was allowed no freedom. Imagine me returning from a solitary moonlight excursion, one night, and receiving a long lecture from the lady of the house upon my late hours. But I am not going to tell all my summer experiences. At last, I was most comfortably placed in Fairmeadow, with dear Mrs. Brackett, a relation of my father's, where I did what I pleased — got up when I chose, rode, walked, and sat by myself. And here I might have lived, in sad ignorance of such a person as my dear friend, Anna Wilkie, when I was attacked with a violent fever — "

"O, Gertrude, you had been so imprudent, wetting your feet, and then sitting all day without once thinking of changing your shoes."

"But, dear Mrs. Wilkie, I ought not to complain, for it taught me the kindness of all the neighbors in Fairmeadow. Miss Prim, whose queer ways I had secretly laughed at, came in, with her sympathizing smile, and her wormwood tea; and Mrs. Dawdle watched with me so kindly. But, best of all, came the saint of the village, the dear sister of charity, — if she could not cure the body, she knew how to heal the soul, — my dear new-found friend, Anna."

"And my dear new-found friend, Gertrude, you must stop; you are growing too tragic. You will never finish your supper; and Uncle Andrew is beginning to cry, and Mr. Newstead wants you to reach him the milk. You must finish your supper, and come to the doorway, before the new moon sinks quite behind the trees."

"Miss Anna," said Mr. Newstead, as they stood afterwards upon the porch, in front of the house, watching the moonlight as it fell chequered upon the trees, — "Miss Anna, you have a quiet, pleasant home here. One would never think, from its stillness, that there was so near you such a noisy, whirling world as I have been into this afternoon. Such life as I have seen in mechanical things, — full of changing motion, — almost expression! And then such death in the human beings around! What a contrast between the whirring, bustling activity of these machines, and the dull mechanism of their operators! And one is almost disposed to ask, which is most conscious of what it is working!"

"O, Mr. Newstead! I am very glad my father is not here — I am glad you could not say this to my father. Or, rather, I almost wish he were here, for he would certainly, if he were not too angry with you, show you how mistaken you are."

"You must excuse me, Miss Anna; I ought, perhaps, not to have spoken so plainly; but I am not accustomed to restrain the expression of my opinions."

"But, Mr. Newstead, how came you in so uncongenial a place?"

"Why, Miss Anna, my home has been, for the last few weeks, among the mountains. I set forth, some weeks ago, on a pedestrian excursion towards the North River. This morning, I was above your house, upon the highest point, admiring the glorious landscape before me. The storm of to-day drove me down into the valley, and I found myself, soon, by the large buildings which your father has erected for his factories. I thought I might find a shelter, and see something quite new to me. I entered the buildings. Your father, I found, was in New York; but the overseer allowed

me to go about at my pleasure, and has promised to-morrow to explain to me everything connected with these great works."

"Sometime my father shall explain to you the powers of these life-like machines you speak of; and, in the mean while, I will try to show you there is some life in those prim-looking figures, whose mechanical air and manner so disturb you. I have found among them some of my warmest friends; and I fear you did not look at them very closely, if you saw nothing more in them than what you say."

"I confess I did not give my mind to what I saw this morning; and I will confess, too, I was a little out of humor. I was disappointed in not finding Mr. Wilkie. I had depended much upon seeing him, to consult with him upon some plans I have. A day or two's delay disconcerts me very much. And instead of employing my eyes, I was turning over, in my mind, whether I would go on, and follow my own inclination and impulses, or listen to the voice of prudence, which warned me to consult one of my best friends, your father. When I met with Uncle Andrew, as you call him, I had so far decided upon the latter course, as to be very glad to accept his kind entreaties, at least to stay the night here, and find out what was the probability of my seeing Mr. Wilkie in the course of a few days."

"My father has probably reached New York to-night; and if he does not return himself, in a day or two, we shall hear from him what are his plans."

CHAPTER IV.

"ANNA," said Gertrude, as the party reëntered the parlor, "your mother and I have got upon the old subject, and I have almost decided to write to Margaret Percival myself. Your mother thinks there would be no impropriety in it."

"Impropriety! — Certainly not. The fact that such a memoir of her is published makes her almost a public character."

"O, Anna!" said Gertrude, "it is not fair to speak so of Margaret Percival, since we have heard how such a history of her was published."

"You speak of Margaret Percival," said Mr. Newstead. "Is there, in fact, such a person? I have heard of a book called Margaret Percival."

"And this book, Mr. Newstead," said Gertrude, "is the history of a real life. Mrs. Wilkie heard, only yesterday, how it was it came to be published. Was it Mr. Churchill or Mr. Harrod told you, ma'am? It appears that her uncle Sunderland fancied that a history of her religious experiences might be useful to some of her younger brothers and sisters — perhaps even to herself. That what she had passed through, for instance, might stand written as a sort of warning. He wrote this without her knowledge. He afterwards showed it to her, and I believe she then added something herself; perhaps made some corrections. And it was afterwards published without her knowledge. He wrote it from her journals and his."

"It was Mrs. Brewster who told me," said Mrs. Wilkie. "She heard it from a friend who corresponds with England. Her idea is, I believe, that Margaret Percival does not, to

this day, know of its publication; but that must be impossible."

"But what sort of a work is it?" asked Mr. Newstead.

"It must be a work of some power," said Mrs. Wilkie, "for it has been most universally read."

"But that," said Anna, "can be accounted for by its being so exact an account of the inner life of a person. One cannot help being interested in reading of mental struggles, which are usually kept concealed."

"I have heard a great many opinions expressed upon it," continued Mrs. Wilkie. "I have heard the characters in the book criticized, as being unnatural; and now it appears it is a real history."

"And Anna's objection to the book," said Gertrude, "is, that Margaret's character is not stronger. Now, it is her very weakness that interests me."

"Miss Anna, then," said Mr. Newstead, "would prefer perfection in her heroine."

"I am not sure," said Anna, "but you are partly right; though this is not my objection to Margaret Percival. I must confess, however, that in a novel, or work of fiction, I am pleased to have the heroine, at least at the end of the book, come out towards perfection. We grow discouraged in real life, because we do not see the result of things; we are impatient that affairs do not turn out crowned with success. Now, it is very encouraging to me to meet, even in a novel, with a heroine who has *conquered*. It gives me a hope, that, though the end is not yet, and I must not presume to look for it here,—this fable of success, I mean, gives me a belief,—that there is such a thing as success, and a triumph over temptation. For instance, I thank Jane Eyre for having conquered, as I would thank a real martyr for having lived and suffered."

"Well, Anna, a biography must tell the truth," said Gertrude; "if it is a true history, we must read of the doubts."

"Perhaps that is the reason," said Anna, "that I do not like biographies — that is, a history of real struggles. In most cases, we, who can see only in part, see only the contest; we know nothing of the victory. The history of Margaret Percival begins and is filled with her doubts. It ends in her faith — in what? In another human being, as frail as herself. She takes up his belief, and assumes it as hers. Now, how long do you suppose this will last? Margaret has only conquered her doubts in outward things of faith. I leave her with a feeling of sadness. It seems to me her trials and struggles are scarcely opening upon her. Instead of being the 'End of Margaret Percival,' it is not even the beginning of her true life."

"And it is just that I want to find out," said Gertrude. "I want to ask her, if she has reached a place of rest, whether she is indeed satisfied with her present belief."

"Mr. Wilkie has taken the memoir with him," said Mrs. Wilkie, "in the cars, to New York, to-day. I interested him somewhat in my account of Margaret Percival; and, Anna, he really talked seriously of getting her out here."

After the girls had retired for the night, Gertrude said:

"I should, indeed, like to talk with Margaret Percival! Did you ever have a longing to meet with some one who had a real true faith, to whom you could always carry your doubts? It is something as I come to you, to be sure; but then we seldom agree — "

"The difficulty is," said Anna, "persons with such a faith as you suppose cannot clear away our doubts, because they cannot sympathize in them. Our doubts are lower than they are, — are of a different nature. I had once such a

friend as you describe. Grace Lindsay's faith was like that of a child — it never wavered."

"Did she never tell you how she came to such a faith? What were the steps that led to it?"

"There were no such steps. I believe this faith was born in her. Don't shake your head — there are such people. For that reason, I could never carry her my doubts and fears. I refrained from speaking of them a long time, because I thought it was wrong to suggest to her such struggles as she, perhaps, had never dreamed of."

"And did you never speak of them?"

"Yes; when at last I was sorely troubled, when the way seemed very dark to me, I went to her. But, as I have told you, she could not comprehend my doubts. It was as if, this bright moonlight night, I were to go to her, and ask her if the moon were shining. And I came away, saying to myself that the blindness was in myself; that it was because 'mine eyes were evil.'"

"But she must have always lived a life without temptation — without trial. Forgive me, Anna — this friend of yours — is she dead?"

"She is the same as dead to me. A few years ago she moved away into the far West. I have scarcely heard from her since. Grace never writes. She is much wrapped up in the duties that surround her — perhaps she is too much so. You, who do not like perfect people, may be willing she should have this one fault. It may arise from her peculiar character. She believes, for instance, in my love, all the same, though we have no intercourse."

"Anna, will you let me say, such a character seems to me an icy one. I would prefer more of impulse, and less of this serenity!"

"You asked me, Gertrude, if she had not lived a placid

life. I must tell you that Grace has gone through what I truly believe would have broken down a character of less strength. I don't often speak of Grace Lindsay; and since I have begun, I will tell you more of her. This was her great suffering: — When her father, some years ago, lost all his property, the person to whom Grace was engaged, whom she had loved, through many years of her life, with her whole heart, deserted her. Mr. Lindsay had to give up his comfortable house and home, and, at last, to leave his native village. But these trials were of little moment, in comparison with her separation forever from him whose name I never like to speak. I cannot tell you the scenes that Grace had to go through. I never saw her but she appeared the same, strong to the last moment. It seemed as if the being called upon to give up her faith in man, had only made her trust in God the stronger. The only time she ever spoke to me of *him*, she said, 'It was a mistake, a sad mistake of mine. I trusted in my own powers. I knew *his* faults only too well. I fancied it would be my part, and now, to lead him from them. But I see all plainer now. The work was too great for me. I leave it now in God's own hands, and in his own time.'

"Whatever I hear of Grace now agrees with the picture I shall always keep of her in my mind. I imagine her moving about, with her calm, serene smile. There are many discordant elements in her home, but her presence there softens them almost entirely. Every one who sees her trusts in her sympathizing smile, and is calmed by her quiet, gentle manner. It was a great hardship for me to part with her, because, to see her, when I was disturbed by any cares or trials, was like looking up at the clear blue sky again, after coming out from a dark, heavy storm. And even now, this remembrance of her — this picture of her in

my mind, going through all her duties with the same look of trust and faith — has over me an elevating effect, and often gives me strength, when I feel fainting and weak."

CHAPTER V.

After breakfast, the next morning, Mrs. Wilkie urged Mr. Newstead to stay until Mr. Wilkie's return.

"It is quite possible, Mr. Newstead, that Mr. Wilkie will be at home Thursday night. This is one of his flying journeys; and I know he does not mean to stay in New York. You can then consult with him upon your affairs; and he will show you everything connected with the factories. Meanwhile, our young ladies will find something for you to admire in our scenery."

"We have planned, for this morning," said Anna, "a long drive; and will make it still longer, Mr. Newstead, if you will go with us. I have promised Gertrude she should see the beautiful view from the hill above the Robber's Cave."

Mrs. Wilkie would not allow Mr. Newstead to think of leaving before Mr. Wilkie's return; and her hospitality was so kindly urged, he could hardly refuse it. Gertrude wished to wait till the letters, by the post, should arrive. Uncle Andrew had gone, at an early hour, to Fairmeadow, for letters; and he brought with him one for Gertrude, from her father. Gertrude went to Anna's porch to read her letter, and Anna soon after followed her there. She found her looking disturbed and sad.

"Anna, I have received sad news from home. It makes me wish I were stronger; that is, of more decision. But I will tell you all, and you shall help me to decide. My

father writes me that Aunt Clara has been sent for, to go to Baltimore, to be with a friend, who is very ill; and she will have to be there, perhaps, all the winter. Now, Aunt Clara has always had the care of the children. Nobody else understands their ways, and nobody can manage them as she does. To be sure, she is strict enough with them —"

"Does your father send for you? Are you to take your Aunt Clara's place?"

"O, no; my father has not thought of that. He has sent the boys to Mr. Grimsby's, where they were at school a few years ago. He never liked the school much; but this is only for the winter. Then Agnes and Lizzie will go to stay with Mr. and Mrs. Spenser. They have a small family; and the girls will be wretchedly managed there. Then he will shut up the house at Elmwood, and means to go into Boston for the winter. And he wants me to form my plans; I must either board with him at a hotel in Boston, or stay with one of my aunts in town. Or, perhaps, with Mr. and Mrs. Spenser — they may let me go there too. He suggests that I might stay, for the present, at Mrs. Brackett's, in the village. You know, when he came up to see me, while I was so ill, he was much pleased with her, and the neatness of her house."

"And, Gertrude, you —"

"Stop a moment, Anna; I know what you are going to say. As I read my letter, I knew that, if you were in my place, you would be satisfied with none of these plans. And I fear you would now advise me to tell my father I will go to Elmwood, and take care of the house — of the children. But, Anna, the very idea overpowers me. The little petty cares of every day would be enough to kill me. If it were anything else, — a struggle with something higher and more noble; but it is just these little things, that one

cannot prepare one's self for, that rise up each moment of the day. Anna, I know I should fail, if I tried to contend with them."

"Perhaps you are not strong enough now, Gertrude. But, the children, — you have often told me how much you wished you could do more for them."

"Yes; and I know that Mr. Grimsby and the Spensers are the last persons in the world to have the care of them. I do not know, indeed, as I am much better than they. Arthur and George are at school all the morning — I might get along with them. But Agnes and Lizzie. Agnes is always getting into trouble. She is in some scrape or other, half the time. And Lizzie is so desponding; she needs constant encouragement about everything. I might tell you, and I am afraid you would laugh at it, of a week's experience of mine, in the care of the house, and of the children."

"I shall not let you tell me now. Mr. Newstead is waiting for us, you know. A quiet drive will help you in your decision. When does your father leave Elmwood?"

"Not till the end of October, or the beginning of November. He keeps the girls with him until then."

"Well, you are promised to me for three weeks, at least; and, meanwhile, you can make up your mind what is best. You are not strong enough now for thinking; and you must lay the subject all aside, at least for this morning. You and I must do our best to entertain Mr. Newstead. I don't think he is inclined to think much of us as it is."

Mr. Newstead, soon after, was driving the two girls through one of the most romantic and beautiful of country roads. It wound along the base of the mountain, and was thickly shaded by the trees on each side. It was constantly crossed by quickly running mountain streams. The dark foliage was here and there lighted up with the first brilliancy

of the autumn colors, and the golden-rod made a sunlight in the shady places. The road avoided the factory village. Anna preferred to return through the village, when they would pass it as the factory people were going to their dinner.

Mr. Newstead was full of enthusiasm for the scenery; and there was not a bright leaf, or brilliant flower, that escaped his notice. He said he would enjoy more such a ride as this, than a visit to any of the renowned places of England, even of Europe.

"I do not love to compare," said Anna, "things that are so different. I do, indeed, think I would not wish to give up my beautiful home scenery here; but I cannot help hoping that, sometime, I may have had both enjoyments. I cannot help feeling, if I enjoy so much here, where even every blade of grass is full of delight and beauty, that when I have there all the beauty and delight of old association beside, the enjoyment will be more intense than I can imagine now."

"You forget, Miss Anna, that when you do see this beauty of association with the olden time — and, indeed, there may be such a thing — you see it in its decay; you see a history of something that could not live. Here, everything is coming forward with vigor and freshness. May we not hope it is a promise of the glorious history that some future age will see written here? You must let me say I am glad these trees, for a little while, hide from us the busy life in the valley, — that is a life transplanted from the old world; it is not worthy this new country, this healthy forest growth. I do not ask to go back into the old country, to see its hoary ruins, and its massive cathedrals; its pictures of stern contrast, of starvation and excess."

"You make me think," said Anna, "of a dream I had of going to England."

"My dreams," said Gertrude, "have been day-dreams. I have never seen such a picture as you give of the old world, before, Mr. Newstead. It is not possible, Anna, you could have dreamed such a picture."

"I cannot tell you," said Anna, "where my picture came from, in my dream. It was very different from all the thoughts I had ever had of England. But the impression it left on my mind is as strong as that of any scene I ever went through."

"It must be very beautiful," said Gertrude, "to dream of the Coliseum, — of Italy."

"My dream was not so bright as that. In my dream, I formed a plan of going to England, — not to see its castles, its beautiful country, and the splendor of its city life, — but I had a Quixotic plan, which, I am sure, I never felt in my waking hours, of going among the poor people. It was a Quixotic plan; for, in my dream, I seemed to feel I had no means or power to relieve what want and suffering I might see; but still I went. I reached there a perfect stranger, and I went to so sad and desolate a place as I never in my life saw. It was in the midst of a crowded city. And yet it was not sad, either; for I was received into this home, — I, a poor stranger, poor as themselves, — by people so hearty, so earnest in their kindness, that I could not refuse the shelter they offered me. The little room where these people received me was more wretched, more dark, than any I had ever conceived of. A cellar, with a little window opening upon a dark yard. I had rather not give you so vivid a description as I might, from its picture in my dream. There were a few sparks of fire in what answered for a stove. The mother was to be gone all day, about some

work; and I agreed to hold in my arms the poor, sick child, who had no better resting-place in the unfurnished room. This poor child, — but I cannot bear to tell you of its suffering, of how it refused to eat the morsel of bread that I begged for it, but was most earnest in its entreaties that it should be kept for its mother and brothers; and this poor, petty piece of bread was given me by a poor woman who lived in the next room, and who had herself barely the means of life. And yet, in this poor, deserted room, there shone out a glow and radiance that made me forget almost the weight of sickness, poverty, starvation, that stared me in the face. I cannot paint it to you better than I can paint the desolation of this home. And this was the strongest impression left by my dream. Not the picture of misery and woe; but almost a gladsomeness, that was created by a kindly home feeling, and that could not be quenched even in such a scene."

"And what you speak of is not merely the fabric of a dream," said Mr. Newstead. "I will acknowledge that, much as I long for the time when there shall be no poorer nor richer, I have often been taught the lesson, that it is very little we can give the poor, in giving them comfort, and the wherewithal to live. For they show us, in their lives, a gift that surpasses these, and a source of happiness independent of these, that rises from their love to each other, and their home happiness in each other."

"It is very true," said Anna, "what Mr. Harrod told us, the other day, in a sermon, that it is very little, the good we do for others poorer than ourselves, in the way of charity, in comparison with the good we do to ourselves, in acting for others. How beautifully these flowers, at the road-side, are clothed, who 'toil not, neither do they spin!'

We cannot fear but that they will be cared for, who struggle, and toil, and suffer, day and night."

"Anna! Mr. Newstead!" cried Gertrude. "Are not those fringed gentians, on the bank, above us?"

On the steep bank of the road, where even the grass refused to grow, they were standing, the beautiful blue gentians, and nodded in the wind, as the party stopped to gather them.

"But, Anna," continued Gertrude, "it is not very pleasant to me, this idea of doing good only for our own sake, after all. You cannot mean to suggest such a motive?"

"No, indeed! Only, in all deeds of outward charity, one has times of great discouragement. There is so much to be done, and we have so little power, and our means are so small! or, we are deceived, and begin to sink under our efforts; then, it is encouraging to think that the act itself has something powerful in itself, and will do something for ourselves, if not for others."

The scenery began now to grow more wild and beautiful. The road reached the river again, and was shut in by high, bold mountains, between which was only space for the narrow road, and for the river to roll rapidly along. It was among the rocky cavities in the mountain that hung over the road that the Robber's Cave could be found. A wild, clambering path led to it, so steep, that it was not till he reached the top that the climber could venture to turn round to see the view below. Then he saw the black, roaring river beneath, the steep precipice, and the rich foliage of every varying shade, that, with bright, glowing colors, crowded and filled in the landscape. And at his very feet lay again the road, winding quietly along. As Mr. Newstead pointed out its beautiful pathway at the foot of the mountains, he recalled a spirited passage he had read

upon the beauty of the high road. He could mostly repeat it.

"What is there more beautiful than a road? It is the symbol and image of an active and varied life. How many pleasing ideas spring up at sight of its capricious windings! It is the pathway for humanity — the high road for the universe. It belongs to no master, who can shut it in, or open it, at his will. It is not merely the rich and the powerful who have the right to tread its flowery borders, and breathe its wild perfume. Every bird may hang his nest from its branches — every wanderer may rest his head upon its stones. No wall or palisade shuts out the horizon. The heavens are not closed before it; and, as far as sight reaches, the road is a land of liberty. On the right, on the left, the fields, the woods, belong to masters; the road belongs to him who possesses nought else. How, then, must he love it! The rudest beggar feels towards it a love that is invincible. Let the world build for him hospitals as rich as palaces — they will be prisons for him. His poetry, his dream, his passion, will be always the road, the common road!"

"You speak this," said Anna, "with an enthusiasm, as if you felt the same love yourself for 'the road.' And, indeed, there can be nothing more exciting than such wanderings as you are making, over hills, by river streams, following every tempting winding roadway. But I should think the high road would hardly offer such temptations as the little cottages by the wayside, — the villages through which the road winds, with the different and inviting characteristics of their inhabitants."

"I must confess, these do not tempt me as much as the wilder scenes of nature; and when my friend, the road, gives me an opportunity to pass around the outskirts of a

village, I most often prefer that which gives me a distant view."

"I think it is quite dangerous, Gertrude, for us to stand on the edge of this precipice with so great a hater of his species as Mr. Newstead. There is some danger in trusting ourselves to his tender mercies."

"You quite misunderstand me, if you think I have not a feeling for these, my fellow-men. I must only express my feelings with regard to the picturesque. In this landscape, for instance, the smoke from that house hidden among the trees adds to it a great charm and beauty. But the house itself, with a glimpse, perhaps, of its every-day occupations, —such a sight would take away one of the great characteristics of this landscape, its air of repose. But this charm of repose even is heightened by the presence of friends who can sympathize with us in its delights, and make us feel less alone, less solitary."

"And such friends, Mr. Newstead, would answer for another purpose, for such as you and Gertrude, — to call you back again into the world. There is Gertrude in most thoughtful mood. She makes quite a picture, among the sumachs and their bright leaves. It seems almost a pity to break in upon the vision that she seems to see far away among the hills upon the horizon. But if we go down now, we shall have time to ford the river just below here, and take the road, on the other side, as far as the bridge, below the factories. We have lingered too long to see the factory village at the dinner hour."

The way homewards was also crowned with many beauties; it kept along the edge of the river. In one place the river spread out into almost a lake. In this, the opposite bank was clearly reflected; every rock and tree, even flower. The bridge crossed the river just where the water poured

over a broad dam, making a noisy cataract. As Mr. Newstead drove up the avenue to the house, they met a wagon. Its driver stopped. "I have just been carrying Miss Nelly Stevens to your house, Miss Anna."

"Ah! then Miss Nelly has come back from Boston; I shall be glad to see her again."

"I shall come for her this evening; I am on my way to the factories, and will take her back again."

"But, Miss Anna," said Mr. Newstead, "you have not told us about the robbers. Why is that little niche called the Robbers' Cave?

"Don't you know that in New England every hill with a fine view is called 'Prospect Hill,' and every hole in the rocks, 'Robbers' Cave?'"

"And were there no robbers?" asked Gertrude, a little vexed.

"Never within a hundred miles."

CHAPTER VI.

Anna greeted Miss Nelly cordially, as they entered the house.

"So you have returned from Boston, Miss Nelly; and I suppose you must have enjoyed a great deal. I thought, Sunday, when I saw you had not returned, that you must be having a good time."

"Ah, yes, Miss Anna; I found such kind friends, I found it hard to return. And, then, I thought it was likely, at my time of life, I should never have another opportunity for so long a journey, and I ought to make a long stay; then the Barneses were coming on yesterday, and they were able

to take care of me; as, indeed, they did, and were very careful of me, till I safely reached home last night. And then I did not feel that I had quite got home, till I had consulted your mother, Miss Anna, and had talked with her of my visit."

"You must have many pleasant things to tell us, who have, all the time, been going on so quietly at home."

"Yes, I have seen great and wonderful things. But, indeed, the most wonderful to me was, that so old and fragile a body as I could get over so many miles, and back again, so safely, and without hurt. Then it is something to learn there are good hearts and kindly feelings growing in other soil, besides ours here at home. Yet, it makes one feel small to see so many people in the world, all going their own ways, and filling up the streets and the byways."

"I am glad if you have come home contented with our quiet ways, and are not going to be longing to go back again."

"Indeed, no. Before I went, it is true, I was quite restless to get away, and see some of my old friends once more; but, as I told sister Prudence, I, too, reaped of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, and that is disappointment! I may as well tell you all at once — how my great longing to get to Boston was, that I might satisfy myself with some new glasses, to help my eyesight. Now, Miss Anna, will you believe it, when I went to choose me some glasses, I was told these would help my eyes no longer — that the fault was not in my poor glasses, but in my poor old eyes — a disease has stolen over them. Some of my friends tell me something may be done for them in the course of time, and that I must wait, patiently, till that time comes. But, I have been telling your mother that I am quite content; I have enough, in the remainder of my life, to make me quite

happy. Don't look so sad, — I can see you are sad. Yes, as you say, you will often help me with your young eyes. I am very thankful now for the old store of hymns I learned when I was young, and which I shall never grow weary of repeating. Sister Prudence knows a sight of poetry; she will repeat me pieces by the hour together, while she sits at her work. The neighbors are all so good. Miss Jane Brackett, this very morning, was telling me she should bring me her fine letters the Kavanaghs send from foreign parts."

"And, Miss Nelly, we must renew our Sunday talks."

"There is a way of happiness open to us all. Then Prudence is very quick with her needle. It is a long time that she has not been willing I should help her at her sewing. A little sight is left me still, though this is fast closing up; but I can see the forms of things, and can trace the motions of your light dress."

Gertrude was obliged to rest herself, after the long drive of the morning; and it was not till the end of the afternoon that Anna could join her in her room.

"Anna," said Gertrude, "as I lie here so quietly, with quiet without, and such peace as there is within, I cannot help almost regretting my days of convalescence that are fast passing away, the days when no exertion is expected of me as a duty, and even thought of exertion is, perhaps, not allowed. I feel as if I would almost welcome pain, rather than freedom from it, with the necessity for activity."

"I remember, when we talked of something like this before, I told you I was reminded of something I once copied from Pascal; and I can read it to you now.

"'A state of illness is a state natural to Christians, because one is then as one ought always to be, suffering evil; deprived of all the uses and all the pleasures of the

senses; free from all those passions that we struggle with in the course of life — without ambition, without avarice; in a constant expectation of death. Is it not thus that Christians ought to pass through life? And is it not a great happiness, when one finds one's self in such a state, that one is obliged, and has nothing else to do, than to submit humbly and peaceably? This is why I ask nothing else than to pray God he may grant me this favor.' This I copied, Gertrude, to encourage me in my days of illness; but, afterwards, I wrote beneath it something that I copied from a review of the life and writings of Pascal, that I read once, and liked. The passage begins with a quotation from Jeremy Taylor. I thought it ought to strengthen me in my days of activity: — 'So long as we are in the retirements of sorrow, of want, of fear, of sickness, we are burning and shining lamps; but when God lifts us from the gates of death, and carries us abroad into the open air, to converse with prosperity and temptations, we go out in darkness, and we cannot be preserved in light and heat, but by still dwelling in the regions of sorrow.' If the mind be well constituted, man will feel that the learning how to apply, in hours of happiness, the lessons which he has learned in the school of sorrow, is not one of the least difficult lessons which sorrow has to teach him; not to mention that the grateful reception of God's gifts is as true a part of duty — and even a more neglected part of it — than a patient submission to his chastisements."

"You must know, Anna, what has led me to be thinking of this. As I have been lying here, I have been thinking of what I had best do. I thank you for what you just read me; but, when I tell you my decision, you will see your encouragement comes too late. I have decided, as you propose, to stay with you for the present. To the Spensers

I cannot go; they are people utterly distasteful to me, and we never get on together. Then, as to taking the charge of the house and the care of the girls, Anna, I am not strong enough — my heart fails. You see what a weak plant you are trying to support. By and by, you will decide to leave me, and let me be cut down, with the rest of the flowers of the field."

"Gertrude, I do not like those tears; they are not good either for body or mind; and I tell you I like the delicate flowers the best, and I will watch over them to the best of my ability, and will water them even with my tears. You must come down and listen how Mr. Newstead is talking with Miss Nelly. It pleases me more than anything I have yet seen of him, his way of showing his interest in her story — and he has so pleasantly drawn her away from thinking of her own sufferings. They are discussing every topic in creation; and Miss Nelly is just now telling how she heard Mr. Mountford — *our* Mr. Mountford — preach, at Thursday lecture."

CHAPTER VII.

"Does any one wish to read?" said Anna, as Mary entered, with a light, after they had come in from the piazza, the same evening.

No one answered. Mrs. Wilkie was knitting; the rest in a group at the west window.

"Then, Mary, you need not light the lamps yet; and," she added, to the sitters round, "we can have a half hour more *croon*, as father is not here to turn over the papers

there. Mr. Newstead, you have sunk into the real twilight talk — half voice, half whisper."

"Is not a whisper a voice?"

"Is it? Not for my purpose, in what I was saying then. You knew what I meant, and what more is language good for? Were you ever a schoolmaster, that you catch me up so?"

"'In course,' I have been. What New-Englander has not, who is good for anything?" he added, in a mock-modest aside. "And a very good schoolmaster I was, too, as long as the mood lasted."

"As long as the mood lasted!" echoed both the girls. "That is just the condition," added Anna; "and how could you keep it up, and how did you?" Gertrude said nothing. She was envying them all three their experience — an experience which most educated women in New England have had, in one form or another, and to which they always recur, as to the mythic, or at least the romantic period of life.

"How long did I keep it up?" answered he. "Have not I told you that I am here fresh from Andrews and Stoddard's Grammar; that it is a constant effort for me not to *analyze* your sentences as you utter them; and that I am always speculating on subject and predicate, as I read the newspapers, or even as you read to me the Bothie of Toperna-fuosich?"

"You have told us no such thing; and the last half of it we should not have believed, if you had."

"Have I not told you that? That shows how zealously I am casting off all mention of the things that are behind. Yes, for two years, I have been at work in the Chichester High School. I sent in my resignation only a month ago to-day. The new term and the new master began last Monday. Am I accurate enough now?"

The girls laughed; though there was something in his tone which none of them quite comprehended. There was not a minute's silence, however; for Anna, in her blunt way of unravelling mysteries, answered him directly.

"You are accurate enough, as far as you go; but perhaps we know each other well enough, after these very well-spent hours, for me to be presuming enough to venture to propose — simply as a suggestion — that it would be gratifying, if it were possible, (and not impertinently asked,) if your new friends could know for precisely what reason you sent in your resignation as aforesaid. Was there a breaking of the ferule, or a general rebellion? Would the boys keep their jackets off in the school-room, and would the committee approve it? Or, did the head master quarrel with the others, or the others with him; or —"

"Or," interrupted he, "did I quarrel with the 'they say' circle of the village, or did it quarrel with me? No! none of these things happened. Chichester is a good sort of place, and there are good sort of people. They made me very comfortable; gave me enough, and not too much, to do. I had some noble boys too, — fine, clear-faced, quick-eyed little fellows, as ever jumped over a bench or upset an inkstand. I think I made friends among them I shall never lose," — and his voice fell again into the gloaming voice a little. "I was sorry to bid them good-by. Your true boy, — reckless, quick, sorry and brave, as need is, at a flash; — fair as heaven, as a true boy is, — is too good a friend to be lightly sacrificed." He stopped a full minute; and this time the girls did not interrupt him.

"I have a great mind to tell you why I left them. You will see, soon enough, — why should not you know now? I did not believe quite enough in what I was at work on with them. It was good for them, but not good for me. Latin

and Greek are the best of gymnastics; but they had done that work for me, — braced up my mind's muscles and nerves, — at least, I should say so, if I dared, — and I did not want to swing on their parallel bars forever." Down his voice went into a tone even more soliloquy-like, just as the western light lost distinctness in the room. "Latin! what is it, even the literature, but the work of artificial people, who borrowed their best, and never could return it? No, ladies; for months past, — and months are long, in such a mood, — I have tired of Europe, as I told you this morning; tired of its history, its language, its old and its new; tired of English politics and of French novels; tired of Louis Bonaparte and of Lamartine —"

"Not of Kossuth?" flashed Gertrude.

"No!" said he; "thank you for saying so. Kossuth is no European — nor his race. He and they are of the East, — fresh from the cradle of the world's life! There is none of your French bedstead about them, or of your English trundle-bed, either. You have hit the key of my riddle, Miss Gertrude; you see I am not ashamed of my enthusiasm. The longing for *home* has come over me. In the midst of these factories, — you saw it yesterday, — in the midst of school-houses, — you might have seen it, if you had known me a month since, — I felt as if I were in strange surroundings. I was as a boy at a boarding-school. And all the time I longed to go *home*, — to the home of everything that the world prizes; — to that glorious East. And, — here was the worst of it, — every day, every hour, there comes a letter from home. I cannot read a verse in the Bible, — but it tells me how fresh and true those lands were, where God could speak and men could hear. I cannot write a word without the thought of the country from which writing came; I read Greek at school only to remember the glorious Eastern

languages which it travesties; — I read Viri Romæ with the boys, to see, as Eliot teaches us, how Rome was the roller to smooth down the road over which the car that started at Bethlehem should travel."

And now he laughed, as one does laugh at his own enthusiasm, and said, as if he were in joke, though he was not:

"You see how tame I think this mock home of ours is. My dream, as I am willing to call it — for I believe in some dreams — led me right away from the school-room. I only wish it would lead me on to Jerusalem. Men go to Germany to study. I should like to enter the college at Tiberias."

The girls listened with close interest to this outbreak, yet with somewhat different feelings. It was so much a burst after Gertrude's own heart, that she sat, even after he had ceased speaking, with his full dream fast becoming one of her own. It would be so grand if one could leave this, that, and the other, at home, and really see the lands which seemed as the vases into which the fountains of old inspiration fell. Anna was in a wholly different mood. The indifferent way in which Newstead spoke of leaving New England, as if it were the easiest matter to be done, — as if he were so sadly cosmopolitan, that he could go to Tiberias with as little heart-pang as to Cambridge, for some years of study, troubled her warm home feeling. She was really thinking, not of Palestine, but of him, — of his orphaned life, his boarding-school boyhood, of all the causes of this easy vibration from place to place, accompanied by so ready a change from plan to plan, — when Miss Nelly said, rather to break the awkward silence:

"You are really going? How soon? And what way?"

"O! that I do not know. Do not laugh, Miss Anna; I am not unpractical. When I go, my arrangements will be

as clear and methodical as one of your friends, the overseers yonder, could make his. See if they are not; though I can really hear the incredulous expression of your face as I speak."

"You hear a mistake. I dare say you can pack a trunk, or bespeak your passage, as well as any one. There is nothing else to do. We are not Crusaders, and you need not go in mail."

"Thank you for your better opinion, — better than I thought it. The real reason why I have made no definite plans is, that I am so practical. I do not pretend to know everything, — an evidence that I am not all poet or romancer. And now, the whole secret is out, of my appearance here yesterday. Your father has given me better advice, in the last twenty years, than all my other friends together. I wish he had been my guardian. (He would not have sent me to ——, to college. But, no matter for that.) I meant to come here, on my journey, to talk this matter over with him. The storm brought me here, as I told you, sooner than I had planned. I shall get his advice, — ruminate on it on my Green Mountain walk, — fit part to part, and mortise to mortise, — and be all ready to go at once to New York, to sail upon the new crusade. Your prayers, ladies, — your good wishes, — and your undying remembrance of the Wandering Palmer!"

A clatter of wheels was heard on the avenue. It was the wagon which had returned for Miss Nelly.

We need add little to the account which Arthur Newstead gave of himself to Margaret and Gertrude. An orphan, — with a guardian who was faithful enough in the care of his little property, without much thought of the boy's education, excepting to see that he was at respectable schools, — he had been left to work out his own opinions, to

indulge his own dreams, to find his own friends. He had passed through this discipline pure and spirited, but somewhat fanciful. When he left college, however, he showed a sense of real manliness, in choosing, as he said, to test his own powers, by going into the Chichester High School, as a subordinate teacher. He was studying men and life there, he said; and he was showing that he was good for something. And it was a matter of pride to him that he earned his livelihood without drawing at all on the accumulation of his little property.

CHAPTER VIII.

Anna and Gertrude were standing with Mr. Newstead on the porch, the next morning, when they saw a little boy, quite out of breath, coming up the avenue.

"John Harvey," said Anna, "is that you?"

"Oh, Miss Anna, I am so out of breath! I have just walked over from Fairmeadow to bring this letter. Mother got home from New York day before yesterday, and she brought this letter from Mrs. Newton to Mrs. Wilkie. And she forgot all about it yesterday; but this morning she found it in the bottom of her trunk, and asked me to walk just as fast as I could, to give it to Mrs. Wilkie, because Mrs. Newton was in quite a hurry to have Mrs. Wilkie get it."

"It was very good of you, Johnny; but I am afraid you have run yourself to death. Sit down in the porch, and tell me a little about your mother's journey."

"I can't stop a minute, ma'am. If I walk fast, I can be at school in time. Only mother is very sorry, and she hopes it will not be too late."

"Here is Uncle Andrew, with his wagon. Jump up on the seat with him, and he will take you to school faster than you can run; and tell your mother the letter came safely. It is just like Mrs. Newton, and a great many other people," added Anna, "to send an important letter by private hand."

Mrs. Wilkie opened the letter, and it proved very interesting to both Anna and Gertrude. It began with sundry pieces of New York news. But Mrs. Newton then passed on to some intelligence she had received from England, which had quite startled her, and led her to ask Mrs. Wilkie's advice. The Stantons, Mrs. Newton's relations in England, were friends of the Percivals; and they wrote Mrs. Newton that Margaret Percival, whose father was now dead, and whose uncle was going, Mrs. Newton did not quite understand where, was just embarking for America. The Stantons were interested in a young woman going out alone in this way, as it were, to seek her fortune; and they rubbed up an old correspondence, by writing to Mrs. Newton, to ask her to offer what advice and assistance she could to the stranger, when she should arrive in New York.

"Now," continued Mrs. Newton, "this letter has come in a most perverse time. Mr. Newton is still at the south, which is one reason why I did not receive the Stantons' letter sooner, for it has been some weeks at his office unopened. Isabel is quite out of health; and we are just in the midst of our plans for our country-seat, which Mr. Newton wishes to put in progress this winter, that we may get out of town early in the spring, and not be so exposed to fever, and all kinds of illness, as we have been the last summer. Each of the children has had its turn of fever; and I myself have been quite laid up — all of us are quite unfit for the coming winter's siege. And now, dear Mrs. Wilkie, here comes this new care, — it never rains but it pours. What am I to

do with an English woman? Coming out, I have no doubt, all prepared to write a book about us all! I can never venture to ask her to come and stay with me; and, as for even giving her a party, as things are now, I don't know how I can manage it. If Isabel were a little younger, I might be disposed to have Miss Percival with us a few weeks, as governess; but the house now is filled half the time with Isabel's masters, — and then Mr. Newton has prejudices against a governess. I shall ask some of my friends if they know of any place for her; meanwhile, I remember that Mr. Wilkie has been very kind in finding situations for young people in want of employment; and I write to ask you if you do not think you can help me in this affair. What the country is to do with the vast amount of emigrants that are pouring here, I surely do not know; and it is a subject that has exercised Mr. Newton a great deal. I have always thought, if the responsibility ever came upon me, I should say to any of these persons I met landing on our shore, 'Turn round — go directly back again.' But I suppose it would hardly be the part of hospitality to say this to Miss Percival. Mrs. Stanton seems to think I have heard of Miss Percival before; and I have an idea she is some authoress. I hope she is not young. Poor thing! I dare say she has heard great stories of America, and fancies she can pick up gold in the streets."

"Poor thing, indeed," said Mrs. Wilkie, as she finished reading the letter, "if she has indeed come out without any prospect of a home! I have no doubt Mr. Wilkie will be able to give Mrs. Newton some advice on the subject. He will be likely to see her in New York."

"Mr. Wilkie is just the person," said Gertrude, "to do something for Miss Percival; but, then, I don't think he is

much interested in Margaret Percival. Do you think he is, ma'am ?"

"If he finds she is here without home or friends, he will be inclined to do something for her."

"And I," said Mr. Newstead, "can almost assure you that you will see Miss Percival here, before many weeks are out. It will be Mr. Wilkie's first impulse to bring her to his own home, and he is not a person to stop and calculate the pros and cons of such a measure."

"Indeed," said Anna, "I should not at all wonder if my father brought Miss Percival home with him."

"At any rate," said Mr. Newstead, "Mrs. Newton does not seem disposed to exert herself to any great extent."

"And yet," said Mrs. Wilkie, "Mrs. Newton is kind-hearted, and if she could decide what were best to be done, would, I have no doubt, exert herself to help on any one in distress."

"If I should really see Margaret Percival," exclaimed Gertrude, "it would make me very happy. I have thought of her so much, I shall be very glad to know if she is at all like my ideal of her."

"And yet," said Mr. Newstead, "I have no doubt you will be disappointed. From what I have heard of Miss Percival, I should think she was a person who thought a great deal, and, quite likely, says little, — the last person one would choose for a companion."

"Ah, Mr. Newstead, you must allow such a person ought to be valued more for a companion, — a person who really has some inward life."

"I only know it is dangerous to expect too much of the common run of people. If they have devoted so very much of their time to an inward life, the chances are, they have less power of expressing it in an outward life. There

is a similar desire to see great authors and writers. You ought to consider that they are famous for having just that peculiar method of expressing themselves; and it is expecting altogether too much to ask them to be agreeable and expressive in other ways, — talkers and companions, for example. An artist devotes all his energy towards expressing his ideal in one way on the canvas. Because he can give you the lights and shadows of nature in a beautiful landscape, the last thing you ought to expect of him is, that he should become a poet too, and discourse to you of such things in a way to fascinate you. It is the same with an actor: he has devoted his talent of expressing himself to bringing out such and such characters; if you look at him off the stage, he is neither one nor the other; and you have to look pretty hard to find anything in the poor man by himself."

"That may be, Mr. Newstead," said Anna, "a very pretty theory to talk about; but an artist becomes so from his taste for everything that is beautiful."

"But it is his power of expression that I am speaking of, and, — not to let you have the last word, — I will allow there are exceptions, — exceptions in favor of genius, — which will grasp at everything. I was speaking of every-day people. A woman's life, for instance, is beautiful, just in its position, like a cameo in its setting. Miss Percival, who went through her duties respectably towards the people around her, — take her away, and make her a lioness, and call upon her powers of conversation, — it is like cutting a bas relief from a wall, in the hope of finding something as beautiful on the other side."

"Nobody wants to make a lion of Miss Percival," said Gertrude, indignantly, breaking off the conversation.

"And I," said Anna, "must say, notwithstanding, that I

have found an artist a highly agreeable companion, and have heard an author entertain a moderate sized room full of people; and I would be glad to ask a poet of my acquaintance to take our moonlight ramble with us to-night."

"I see I should stand no chance with you, if he came; so you must let me rejoice that he is not here."

"I do think," said Gertrude, afterwards, "that Mr. Newstead can make himself perfectly disagreeable."

"Now," said Anna, "you must not abuse Mr. Newstead too much; do you know I think he is like you, in a great many things?"

"Anna, you are really too bad!"

"And I, too," said Anna, laughing, "perhaps have the same power of making myself disagreeable, by comparing you to him! But, remember how you praised him up, last night. We certainly have found some pleasant things in him. But, Gertrude, my mother and I had a little serious talk about Mrs. Newton's letter, and she thinks, and, indeed, I agree with her, that it is quite possible that my father will see Mrs. Newton, and become interested in Margaret Percival's fate. He knows how much my mother has been led to think of the history of Miss Percival's past life, since she has known it was a true history; and she has almost determined to write to my father, or Mrs. Newton, or both, to propose her coming here, and to add a letter to Miss Percival to urge it. Since she has heard Margaret Percival is motherless, she has been the more drawn towards her."

"How glad I am there is likely to be such a home for her!"

CHAPTER IX.

Anna and Gertrude sat by a rock upon the river-side. They had left the house, had crossed the road, and clambered down the hill-side, till they reached a pleasant spot, where the autumn sun shone in.

"How very strange," said Gertrude, "that Margaret Percival should be really coming to America! And she is coming, perhaps, to seek some rest, some repose. Is it not Anna, something like the feeling that leads Mr. Newstead to long to go back to the old eastern land, — a feeling that somewhere *else*, one may find a spot fitted for one's ambition?"

"Yes, Gertrude, a feeling that I, at times, sympathize in. I could easily learn to say what Rabia, one of the holy women of Arabia, said. When she reached the Mecca that had been the place all her holy thoughts had aspired to, — so Milnes tells the legend, — she cried out: —

> 'Oh, heart! weak follower of the weak,
> That thou shouldst traverse land and sea,
> In this far place, that God to seek,
> Who, long ago, had come to thee.'

In my better moments, I feel that there is as much inspiration for devotion and a life of devotedness, in my daily life, as in any other way of living; even, Gertrude, in the holy cell of a nun."

"But, Anna, there is a feeling of dissatisfaction that I must express. I don't want to bring up again the *woman* question, but I want to speak of my own trials and doubts. Just think how little time or opportunity is offered to a

woman to devote herself to any one art, or study, or pursuit! Her life seems to me a frittering away of effort; and how seldom is anything accomplished — how superficial seem all our labors!"

"It is rather a sad thought to think how superficial our knowledge is; and one's ambition is, indeed, excited, when one hears of a woman who, now and then, has successfully devoted herself to one great object. But when, as you say, I come back to myself, I confess I do not know what I would give up of my superficial education. I daily thank my old German teacher for his patience with my drawing-lessons, though, after his and my many efforts, I am afraid I could not give even you a satisfactory outline of Gray-peak, yonder. Perhaps the time might have been employed in something I have a greater talent for; but I would not, for anything, give up the help it has given me in appreciating the sunsets of every night; and I thank those hours, because they have given me courage to read and enjoy deeply the true, beautiful descriptions of our friend of the Modern Painters."

"Yes, that I believe; nor would I give up my many hours of practising at the piano. There is one thing I can thank them for, Anna, — that at twilight I can give your mother so much comfort, when, for once, she takes some rest, and seems pleased with my little efforts."

"And how these hours of merely the study of the alphabet of music have helped us in listening to its great poems, — to Beethoven and Mendelssohn! I have only wished my thorough bass lessons had come to me earlier in life; they would have absolutely enticed me into mathematics, that in my school days I so sadly avoided. But, back to our subject, Gertrude. I believe we do not think very differently; only, I would have my 'perfect woman' know a little of

everything, — and yet she need not know it superficially. For I have a theory that a study of any one thing helps us on in something else; as I have found that a steady practicing at the piano for some time has made my hand more firm afterwards in drawing; and I have studied the more vigorously on my German, hoping that my study will help on, meanwhile, my Italian, that is lying neglected, alas! How much Jane Brackett and I enjoyed puzzling over our translation, that we made with so much difficulty, of Goethe's Metamorphosis of Plants! And how my enjoyment was renewed, when I was able to read it to my father, and he took such pleasure in hearing it! I remember, Jane told me she could read Italian better, after some hard study of German, because it required a similar exercise of her mind. We know it is so in science, that the botanist finds that, besides the study of all other natural history, he must call in the help of mathematics, and may even find that the laws that he is studying may be the same that are ruling the course of the stars.

"But, as far as you and I are concerned, perhaps it would be safe for me to speak only of myself; — I feel as if it were better for *me* not to turn away from any study that opens itself to me. There is so much time in this world! And we may find time, by and bye, to finish what we are beginning feebly now."

"I remember I almost envied you that you were able to help little Neddy Brackett about his Virgil."

"And yet, how little I was in advance of him! It makes me sigh, indeed, to think of how little one knows, and how much there is to be known! But you see I would have my 'perfect woman' begin with a broad foundation, in the fond hope that, some time or other, in some world or other, there would be a glorious, complete structure! The more various

one's knowledge is, the more opportunities one has to sympathize with others."

"How beautiful, how perfect, this delicate green fern is! As perfect and complete as you would have your perfect woman. And this pale white one, growing by its side — poor thing! it has *failed*, I am afraid, and its strength was not great enough to keep its life and greenness."

"Yet you admire and love it enough to open for it your Emerson's Essays, that has been closed to everything else, until now. After all, it is not the approach to strength or perfection that wins us most. How much peace and happiness a patient invalid may spread through a household! We have neither of us such a life to look forward to, and should probably mourn heavily if we had such a prospect. But how great an influence of love and gentleness is spread by a delicate, gentle, suffering invalid! And how many greater causes of unhappiness there are than sickness offers! When I speak of sickness in this way, I am thinking of its personal influence upon one's self. I know it is one of the greatest of sorrows, to see a being one loves, suffering under sickness, and not to have the power to give strength. But, on looking back upon my life, — upon its hours of sickness, — those hours that some dear friend of mine would fain have prayed away beforehand, — to these I feel I owe much of my strength and power of patience. They were my hours of fitting myself for battle, the sources of many of my best resolutions, and have done much for my character."

"Perhaps in that way I shall look back to the hours I have passed here. I know I shall look back to them as to my happiest hours. I am very glad Margaret Percival may perhaps make her first acquaintance with America in such a home as yours. It is very pleasant to see so happy and

gay a home, — every one taking so deep an interest in each other's occupations. In that way, Anna, I have learned a great deal. I feel that I have lived in a great part selfishly, and have kept all my sources of joy to myself. It is a new pleasure, this of looking out, for instance, upon a beautiful landscape, with one who sympathizes with me as you do, Anna. I have a new association with all the beauties of nature, and the remembrance of this rock, and the river washing it below, will always have mingled with it the many thoughts we have had together here, and the moments of sympathy passed here. You will bring Margaret Percival to this pretty spot, when she comes."

"O, yes, Gertrude; if she is in search of a home, we must do our best to help her to find one among us. You must get quite strong again, that we may show her, together, all the beautiful walks we can find. She is, apparently, a great walker, and we will take her up hill and down the dales. She shall see all the fine views in the country about. Then she shall be intimately acquainted with Miss Nelly Stevens. And I will carry her to the district school, and she shall see the bright, happy faces of the children, and hear their merry voices. And you must do all this; — but first, you will have to get back all your strength, and you must not stay out longer now. We must climb up the path slowly, — do not look back till we reach the top. There is a place to which I used to wish we might move the house, the view of the valley is so beautiful from it. And now, you know, we have it all shut out by the trees and the orchard. You cannot think, Gertrude, how much attached I am to this spot; yet it is only four or five years that we have been here, and then it seemed to me so hard to leave our old home and our old friends. I wonder if it is as hard for Miss Percival to banish herself."

"I should think she had very warm feelings."

"And yet she was able to forsake the death-bed of her friend, because she could not trust her soul meanwhile to God. You would think hardly of any one, who left a dying friend, from fear of catching some disease of the body; — does it not seem very weak to fear to trust one's soul to God's care by the side of one who is so near to God as to be on the threshold of his kingdom? But, Gertrude, I forget myself, when I talk so harshly, — I forget that Miss Percival is a real being. When she does come here, — if she should come here, — I have no doubt I shall be interested in her too."

"Indeed, I know you will, Anna; and if she is weak, and wants strength, the more you will support her. I wonder how she will look, — if she will like us."

"I think she will take more to you than she will to me. I am afraid she will be surprised at a great many things here. Let us hurry home; I think we may find some news from my father at the house."

CHAPTER X.

The mail, in fact, brought two letters to Mrs. Wilkie from her husband, which we copy at full length, as they best explain themselves.

MR. WILKIE TO MRS. WILKIE.

"Steamboat Connecticut,
Somewhere off Throg's Neck, Tuesday, P. M.

"My Dear Wife: —

"You must accept this indefinite date as the best attainable, at this writing, by any one on board, from the chamber-

maid, who answers the ladies' perpetual questions, in their cabin, up to the captain, who answers nobody's at all. In fact, we have made a miserable day of it. I should have been in New York before this, if I had staid at home twelve hours longer, and taken the cars instead of the boat; for, since midnight, we have been befogged. Our bell has been rung from epoch to epoch, as a charitable suggestion to oyster-smacks to keep themselves from collision. Our engine has moved slowly when it could, but we have advanced but little. It is only just now that the light is increasing, and that we begin to promise ourselves a supper on land.

"For myself, I should have foundered wholly, had I not had this Margaret Percival book, which you tucked into my coat-pocket, which has just kept me afloat in the ocean of dulness of these seventeen mortal hours. And, for you, my dear, I think you will be indebted to this fog for the first literary letter you have had from your husband since the day that made us one. I remember there were times when I wrote you, at some length, my views on Wordsworth's Excursion, and Count Robert of Paris; but, somehow, that class of letters has died out, of late.

"I say 'Margaret Percival' has just kept me afloat. Clearly, I am older than I was, or I could say more. For, as I told you, the boys devoured the book with enthusiasm; and I think Gertrude read it in the same way. With me — alas! — it would be six or eight pages' reading, and then a brisk walk on the promenade deck, — then, the black stewardess would come up, and beg me to remember the ladies trying to sleep under the thump of my boots, — then, ten pages more of Margaret Percival, — then, a long talk with some emigrants on the forward deck, till a rain-shower drove me in, — ten pages more of Margaret Percival, — then, a chaffer by the wheel-house, with the loafers there,

till the captain civilly warned us away, — ten pages more of Margaret Percival, — breakfast, at last, — ten pages more of Margaret Percival, — and so, through the day, it has been my reserved corps.

"Well, it is a shame to laugh, as if it had not been a very effective reserved corps. I like it better and better; and have thought a good deal of it, and the state of society and religion which could have produced such circumstances, and such a woman. In truth, my dear, it is not the fog, it is Margaret Percival herself, to whom you owe this letter. That very respectable, sincere, hard-working Pope, her uncle, who bids her to and fro as he thought right, interests me as every vigorous man does. For his sake, I am glad it was not the nephew George who took the Popish turn; for, I am afraid a young man of twenty would not have been quite so submissive as a girl of five and twenty. But, Margaret herself pleases me most. The 'Lamp of Obedience' is a very good lamp out of the seven; and the good girl keeps it trimmed and burning. To be sure, I think she could have kept some other lamps burning side by side with it; but, she did her duty as she understood it, and angels do no more.

"The hits at Dissent, the talk about descending as low as the Dissenters, and all that, does not affect me as you feared it would. I neither threw the book into the Sound, nor into the stove, when I came to them. They are the natural result of the author's position; they are to be taken as simply as one takes the language in which the book is written. They are as unconsciously used as is any local idiom by a person bred to it. And, just as I read a French book without impatience with the author, though I detest the French language in itself, so do I read Miss Sewell's, — esteeming her as a pious, sincere woman, though she has a trick of talk, when a Dissenter, or an Independent,

or a Unitarian, crosses her way. She is wholly unaware of the force or the origin of the style of language she uses; and especially here, where she is combating the Romanists.

"To come back to Margaret herself. Such a woman did need the training which God's Providence has given her. I have no idea that that Providence is done with her there. She was not sent into the world merely to get a brother through Oxford, and rest on a line of religious faith into whose foundations she is ordered by her spiritual physicians not to inquire. True, she was willing to satisfy herself with the sacrifice this effort required, as long as the effort lasted. She has made the sacrifice, made the effort, in a very womanly and faithful way. But what next? One sees that she had every young girl's impatient feeling for a *mission*, — the wish to be a Maria d'Escobar, or a Madame Guyon, or a Margaret Fuller, or a Sister of Charity. That appears in the very beginning of the biography. (For *biography*, as you say, it clearly is.) Here is the reason why your Sunday-school girls read it, why Gertrude reads it, why the pale girl from boarding-school, opposite me, as I write here in the saloon, is reading her copy now. But, just on that point of interest, the book leaves her where it found her. What shall a young woman do, with this earnest desire for a field of life? It states the question well. And fifty thousand girls, fresh from school, clutch hold of it, as pale-face yonder does, because it states the question; — they read on and on, — it turns out, that Margaret fits her brother for the Church. There was her answer to the question. But what then? Why, there the book ends!

"'Happiness for to-day,' are the last words. And what for to-morrow?

"What a tirade I have written! But, for once, I can write as I think, without being stopped to talk about indigo or long

staple, or to listen to first-hands or overseers. What all this is driving at, is this: that I have a feeling which I overheard Gertrude expressing to Anna. I should like to see and talk with this Uncle Sutherland, and Margaret, and George, and all of them; and as that cannot be, I mean to write to them, if I ever gain a half-hour to do so.

"I hear you laugh, as you read these words. I hear you say, that I shall not write to them till I am again befogged on Long Island Sound; and then, only if I have no President's Message to read. Laugh away, if you please. Only see if, when I come back, I do not tell you that I have been to Appleton's bookstore, or to Dr. Wainwright, or somebody who will know, to find out Margaret Percival's address, and her uncle's, in England.

"Hurrah! there is sunlight! The fog sweeps off as strangely as it comes on. I will close this long letter now, that I may mail it as we go up town. My love to all. Hurlgate is in sight. Ever yours.

MR. WILKIE TO MRS. WILKIE.

{ "*New York Hotel,*
{ *Wednesday, P. M.*

"My Dear Wife:—

"I doubt, if, after all my pains yesterday, you receive a certain literary, theological, meditativo-enthusiastical letter, which I wrote yesterday on the Sound, much before this. They will probably go on in the same mail-bag. We arrived in time for tea last evening.

* * * * * *

"If the letter aforesaid, my No. 1, has amused you, it has also prepared you to hear that I have made search for the whereabouts of a certain Dr. Sutherland and his niece,

Miss Margaret Percival. In very fact, I went down town this morning, with the name of Appleton's bookstore full on my tablets, that I might not forget to inquire. But before I came there, that fortune that favors the brave, — say, rather, that reward which waits on all true virtue, — flung my jewel of information sought in my way, and rewarded my quest with the real prize itself, in a way which could hardly have been fore-dreamed.

"Thus happened it: — As you bade me, I, obedient, went to call at the Newtons', to tell them, this time, that I was at New York. Mournfully did I await Mrs. Newton's appearance; for I knew she would ask why I had been away from New York so long, and I knew I must confess that I had spent four several weeks in the city, this spring and summer, without the opportunity of renewing our tender intimacy. With such thoughts as these did I await; but with no such questioning did she appear. She was overjoyed to see me, — that, of course, — but just now, especially overjoyed; for she had written, only a day or two before, to dear Mrs. Wilkie, (you,) a letter about a very troublesome affair, which had really robbed her of her rest, — and which she had been so rude as to thrust on you, — and which she really was ashamed of, and which she really did not understand, etc., etc., — (you know how,) — till it came out that actually she is a correspondent of the Percivals, and at that very moment was in mortal dread that the packet Curran might be coming up the bay with Margaret Percival on board, consigned to her very care, 578 Green-place, west of Broadway. All which, she says, she explained to you. I trust she explained it better than to me; for she was in such terror at such a catastrophe, that it required some cross-questioning for me to find out what had happened, or was likely to.

"In fact, it is rather bad for her. Her husband is away, and her household is sick. She evidently thinks Margaret Percival a blue; I am sadly afraid, my dear, that that is the reason she turned her over to you so readily. And the thought of having a wild English woman, in search of a mission, turned in upon her pretty, fashionable, down-stairs establishment, or upon poor, sick Isabel's quiet, hospital-esque, up-stairs establishment, had naturally enough discomposed her.

"I asked how all this happened in England. I wanted to know just how Miss Percival got on, after her brother's ordination. Well, — it seems that Mrs. Percival is dead; George is a curate, somewhere, on a very small stipend; Craven is stationed at Hyderabad, and this grand break-up is occasioned by Dr. Sutherland, (he is Dr. now,) having received some good appointment in the Church, in New Zealand. Mrs. Newton thought bishop, but I guess not; it is no matter. He behaved very kindly to Margaret, as such a man would; but still they thought she had better not go with him. She staid at home with the younger children; tried to keep up an establishment near George's; but has been disappointed in fifty ways, poor girl! — you can easily see how; — and, at the last disappointment, has started for America, believing that there may be room for a well-educated woman here, even if there is not in England.

"All this developed itself in an hour's talk. I told Mrs. Newton that I thought Miss Percival was right. That I had often wondered (as you have heard me say fifty times) why high-spirited English women, left to their own exertions, did not do this, instead of leading that sadly dependent and abused life which the English novels profess they do lead at home. I was rather amused at her answer to me. She took me up, at once; 'It might be very easy for

such persons to fare well in the interior; certainly, not in the cities. Surely, she did not know what Miss Percival could do in New York. Perhaps, if I was so confident of her success, I might suggest some feasible opening for her talents, somewhere in Massachusetts.' To which, very simply, I replied, that I thought it very probable; — as I had been a teacher myself, I often had applications from those who wanted such; — I would certainly be glad to assist Miss Percival, in whom I was greatly interested: and so we parted.

"Was n't it queer, after all I wrote you yesterday, that this should have turned up to-day?

"If you please, you may write to Chichester, to ask young Newstead if there is any chance for Miss Percival in the High School, where he is. And you may write to Northampton, to the X's, too. The Curran has been out thirty-one days already.

* * * * * *

"I hope to be back on Tuesday."

Saturday morning, a few days after he had despatched this last letter, Mr. Wilkie received, as he was breakfasting, a hurried note from Mrs. Newton, to tell him that she had word from "down town," that the Curran was below, and that she expected Miss Percival and friend at her house by noon. The good woman had not failed in the duties of hospitality, and her heart, always in the right place, was prompting her to do everything to give the unfortunate English stranger a ready welcome. But, just at this juncture, as at some other junctures, she felt terribly the want of a skilful head, to carry out the promptings which so generously suggested themselves; and, in her husband's absence,

she was glad enough to beg Mr. Wilkie, as he had seemed interested, to be present at the very introduction scene, if he could; and if not, to help her through the day, with her new guest, as well as he could. This he gladly promised to do. He found, on inquiry, that Mrs. Newton had attended to all the externals with due care. Her carriage, with a young friend, was waiting at the pier to which the steamboat brought up the passengers; and, at one o'clock, with their hand-baggage with them, Miss Percival, and the companion of her voyage, Mrs. Winterton, received Mrs. Newton's cordial welcome at her home.

It was naturally a moment which both parties had looked forward to with some dread; but that dread gave way, on the very moment itself. Mrs. Winterton was a lady; she understood herself, and her position. Mrs. Newton, like a thousand other women, who show some weakness in conversation, or in using the pen, was at home in kindness, and whatever kindness dictates. Of her own home she was queen; and more successful was she than she knew, in making others at ease in it. Just at this instant, too, an amazing weight passed from her, as she looked at Margaret Percival. As Mr. Wilkie had seen, she had formed a terrible idea of Miss Percival, as being shockingly literary, — a real ultra-marine blue. The relief, therefore, as she looked on the very pleasing, timid, but somewhat confiding womanly face of the young English girl, was very great. She breathed free. She became at ease, at once.

And Margaret? She felt at a crisis in her life. Here was a moment she had been looking forward to so long; here was the turning-point in a scheme which so many of her friends had thought mad. This was the time when she ought to feel excited, exalted, highly strung; and, instead of that, she felt in a very common-place mood, as if

she were in very every-day like circumstances. Perhaps she was disappointed. But still she was at ease. She did not feel as if she was on the rack; she did not feel as if she ought to make a speech. In a pretty parlor, she was receiving the welcome of a well-bred woman whom she had never seen before. Such things had happened fifty times in England. It was a disappointment, perhaps, that nothing seemed more romantic. But it was a disappointment which is very apt to happen. The feeling of change to a traveller does not so often come with the first moment as afterwards. And so it was that Margaret noticed that the landscape which hung opposite to her must be from the pencil of an English artist whom she knew; noticed that the instruction-book, on the piano, was open at the very tune which she had made Harriet drum through so often. So was it, in a word, that Margaret was at her ease.

And now came, sooner than any one would have wished, but no sooner than seemed necessary, plans and explanations. Mrs. Winterton had come out to join a brother, whose address she had with her, who was living in Georgia. She expected to find, in New York, letters from him; and it had only been at Mr. Wallace's urgency that she had come up with Margaret to Mrs. Newton's house, as she professed that she had no claim on Mrs. Newton's hospitality. Mr. Wallace had sent a servant for these letters to the post-office, while the party came up to Mrs. Newton's; and in a few minutes the letters followed them. It seemed, on reading them, that her brother was ill, and she was begged to lose no time in New York, but to join the family in Georgia as soon as possible. To her anxious inquiries how this must best be, the gentlemen were obliged to answer that she would gain at least two days by taking the Southerner steam-ship for Charleston that very afternoon.

As soon as this appeared to be really the most feasible plan for her, nothing was to be done but to carry it through assiduously, and speed the parting, who had but just been the coming, guest. The gentlemen at once found her New York friends; her arrangements were hurried through at the custom-house, and after two or three hours only of hurly-burly, Margaret bade her good-by, as she took the southern steamer; and now, indeed, after this unexpected addition to the excitement of the morning, found herself alone, in a strange land.

Mrs. Newton had the thoughtfulness, however, to leave her alone. She needed rest, and in the pretty room arranged for her she found rest, and that communion with the Father in which no loneliness can live. A few words written to her brother George seemed a fit close for this hour of thought and prayer; and when the family gathered in the evening, Margaret found herself ready to appear among them, not wholly dispirited, and by no means alone. She had learned already to trust in Mrs. Newton's kindness of intention, and had been so much pleased with Mr. Wilkie's blunt frankness of manner, as to be glad that she had heard him say that he should look in late in the evening. He seemed to her more un-English, — more American, she supposed it was, — than anything or anybody she had yet seen.

So, when the bell rang for tea, she went down stairs in good heart. And there were the children, ready, with a little helping, to help her through this first evening; — thorough cosmopolitans as, in their way, children are, — annihilators of time and space and all, up to the half young lady Isabel, who was quite *proper* and very much frightened. The children were willing to ask and be told about Harriet, and Grace, and Philip, and their school, and Harriet's les-

sons, and Philip's pony; and eventually were quite ready to communicate, for her correspondence home, similar items of intelligence in their own affairs.

Before it was fairly time for the children to go to bed, Mr. Wilkie appeared. Perhaps Margaret was a little surprised at the extreme familiarity with which he greeted her. Yet she certainly was not sorry for it; and she had a feeling, herself, towards him, as one of the first persons whom she had met here, which answered to his cordiality very unaffectedly. He felt, himself, that he was more at home with her than he should have been with almost any one else so situated, and very simply told her that it was only two days before that he had read the published part of her biography, — that that had excited a wide interest in America, among persons of her own sex and age, and he showed her, laughing, the entry which he had made in his tablets of an intention to call at the booksellers' to find her address in England.

This matter of the publication of the leading facts in an important part of her life had never been particularly agreeable to Margaret. She had not meant to live before folks. She had no love for a glass-house exhibition of private emotion, repentance, prayer, and suffering. It had been through no movement of hers that the manuscript memoir had been printed. But she had long since schooled herself to think, that the unfortunate publicity which it had brought upon her, was part of the Providential discipline which was to train her life, and she had submitted her own feeling about it sweetly and kindly. Although, therefore, she winced a little at first, at finding that in the new home she had sought she was as much before the public as in the old, she reconciled herself at once to any measure of disappointment springing from that discovery, when she found that the

biography had gained for her in America at least one friend.

Their conversation became intimate at once, although, of course, in no sense confidential, and not often serious, or especially thoughtful. Before the short evening had passed, Mr. Wilkie had told her of his own Massachusetts home, of his wife, and daughter Anna, of the village and factories, of Gertrude, of their daily occupations, of their amusements summer and winter, — a narrative of a mode of life quite new to her English experience. She, on her part, had been led on to tell him of the various sudden Providences which had broken in on that quiet, useful, English home, where, on the day of George's ordination, she had ventured to say, "Happiness for to-day." She had told him of her disappointments for years afterwards; she had been delighted to find that he did not regard her American emigration as at all Quixotic, and had already almost accepted his invitation to come and visit his wife before she made any definite plans for the future.

"Surely, if this is half a day," she said, as she went up stairs to bed, "I shall not fail for friends in my new home."

CHAPTER XI.

Sunday afternoon, an hour before sunset, Mr. Wilkie called to see Margaret Percival. She was glad to see his friendly face, and glad, too, when he proposed that they should walk together. After the confinement of shipboard, her eagerness to try the stability of the earth was really an intense longing. And she had not yet lost an English woman's absolute need of God's air and light every day of

life, Sunday included. They were very near St. Matthew's Church, so that her walks to and from service had been only a taste to her of the beauty and exhilaration of an October day.

Margaret was the more glad that Mr. Wilkie proposed this walk, because she felt — as who does not? — that you "get on" a great deal faster with a new acquaintance in a long, pleasant walk, than in a much longer sitting-still visit. Every step you take seems to crack the ice: there are no walls near by to listen to what you say; — there are better suggesters of conversation than are the books on the table or the figures on the carpet. In short, there are fifty reasons why dear friends often date back to a long walk together, as the very first moment when their respective mercury-drops melted into one, — when they two really sympathized with each other.

Mr. Wilkie led her quite up town. She was strong, and walked fast, so that they came into the less thickly built parts of the ever advancing frontier of the city.

"I had half a mind to call for you an hour ago," he said. "I was going down to see a poor countrywoman of yours, from Leeds, who is making up her mind to trust me with one of her boys, when I go home. She would have been glad to have seen an English woman."

"Why did not you come?" answered Margaret, in real regret.

"I knew you would like to go; but I knew, too, that the excitement of yesterday, and the different excitement of to-day, would have tired you. And so I did by you as I would have wished any one to have done by Anna. I did not offer you the temptation to fatigue, where you might have thought it a duty to go. I did not want to lead you

beyond your strength. And I thought you would not choose to refuse."

"Thank you," said Margaret; "for I know you do not mean to flatter me. — Now I am sorry I said that. Why need we talk of flattery, as if we meant to be on formal terms? I am sorry you did not come, because, as I told you just now, the walk is just the thing for me. But tell me about this poor Leeds woman. How do you know anything about her? Has she lived at Fairmeadow?"

"O, no! I never saw her, or heard of her, till Friday. But, of course, I am not so much of a stranger here as she is. I am here in my business several times a year; — I have friends, and correspondents, and all that, here; — and she, poor soul, arrived from England only six weeks ago; her husband died just after, and she has her three or four children here. They are staying with some relative, a sort of sister-in-law, who seems good-natured and kind, as the poor are to the poor. I met the boy in the street, Friday, and so my acquaintance began."

"Acquaintance?"

"Yes. In our country villages we have no poor, to speak of. Our duty to the poor takes, therefore, rather a different form from yours, in large towns, in England. We have very little suffering at home. Here, in the large towns, there is a great deal. Our duty is, therefore, to absorb what our poor little ducts can of what we find here. These sea-ports receive myriads of emigrants, who come, they know not why, to do, they know not what. They arrive, and wait on Providence, in the miserable hovels of a town like this. What should be done for them is to lead them off into the country towns. A long preface, this, — but I make it, to explain to you why, almost always, when I come to New York, I pick up an English, Irish, or German

boy, from some of these new-comer families, who are waiting here, thus: — I see his father or mother, if he has either or both, and persuade them to let me find him a home with me, or some of my neighbors, in the country."

"Do they trust you? Do they assent readily?"

"Very often they do not. Very often there is no one but the officers of the Poor establishment to consult. There are so many orphans among these children, that, unless I have 'happened' on a child, — unless Providence has thrown one in my way, that is, — it needs but a visit to the proper Department to pick one out; and, as I am known there now, they are ready to apprentice such a boy to me, or to any person for whom I will vouch that he will take faithful care of the child. Well, these boys soon become accustomed to our ways. I think sometimes, too, that the great adventure of a voyage in early life starts them up, gives them alacrity. At all events, we take as good care of them as we can, and they almost all turn out well."

"'Turn out'! What do you mean? I do not understand. You mean in the mills?"

Mr. Wilkie laughed. "No, 'turn out well' is Yankee for 'succeed.' In the two or three instances where I have taken such boys home to my own farm, or my neighbor's, or to my factory, from families here, it has ended, in every case, in their drawing the whole of the family up to Fairmeadow after them. I mean in those instances where time enough has elapsed. I dare say it will be so now. I met this boy on Friday, crying in the street. He is a fine-looking little fellow, some ten years old. He had lost his way. His mother had had the good sense to pin into his pocket a bit of paper with the name and number of the street upon it. This I found out, after I had soothed his crying; it was not far off, and I went home with him. As I walked on, talk-

ing with him, I thought I would just ask his mother what her plans were for him; for he told me his father was dead, and it was clear enough that they were very poor. When I came to see how sadly off they were, even for common comforts, I was confirmed in this resolution. But I said nothing, Friday, nor yesterday, about it. I did not want to startle them. I took care that they should be a little more comfortable; and to-day I got an introduction to the Union Society's visitor for their district, who, I found, knew them. He went with me, to encourage them to consent to the separation, and we have just now broached it to them. I do not know what they will say. I did not press for an answer. I always let such things work."

"Shall you bring him up as a servant in your family?"

"Servant? — yes;" said Mr. Wilkie; and he laughed. "That is so English! He will be my humble servant, very much as I am yours, as you are mine, as I am my wife's, and as she, for a year or two, will be this boy's, till he grows old enough to be of more use than now. You will see, when you come up on your visit. He will do what he can for us; we shall be bound to do what we can for him. Just now, he will go to school, he will go to pick wild strawberries for my wife, he will ride to the post-office for me, he will ride the plough-horse for Uncle Andrew. When he is old enough, we shall see what to do with him. If he is handy, he will go into the factory. If he likes the farm, we shall make a farmer of him. If he is fond of figures, he will grow up an engineer. If he should prove signally book-learned, I shall send him to college, and he will pay me back what it costs before he is of age. All depends on him. Strictly speaking, he will be bound to me as an apprentice till he is of age."

Margaret was pleased to see Mr. Wilkie's matter-of-fact

way in going to work in such matters. She was pleased with the ease, — wholly free from the miserable vanity of mock charity, — with which he told her of his plans. She saw, too, that she was in a different land from what she had left. There was, at the same time, a grateful feeling, that she had found, so soon, the Christian spirit working, in the forms so new to her, of so new a world. In Mr. Wilkie's way here was the same generous zeal, acting, not formally, or showily, but in a straight-forward, systematic fashion, which had shown itself at home in her Uncle Sutherland's very different way, — in the very different circumstances of his cure. They walked on, without speaking, till Margaret caught herself saying aloud, "There are diversities of administration, but the same Lord."

"Perhaps I can read your thoughts," said he. "You are contrasting this prospect, — which I am glad you were able to walk out to, — with one of your English walks, at home."

"I might have been doing so," said Margaret, "and might have said what I did in that contrast. Things are so different! Even these trees that shade the side-walk are not English."

"They are American elms."

"And the curve of the hills, yonder, is strange. The color of the sky is strange. The very dust that blows up before that carriage is a different color from our dust."

"And so the sunset, which the dust will help to make, will be different from your sunset. A pleasant, true-hearted friend of mine, in Boston, used to say, — it was years ago, too, — that if we had no dust in our evening walk, there would be none in the horizon, and that we should lose half the glory of the sunset."

"That was a pleasant notion. But, to go back to what

we spoke of. I spoke of diversities of operations, because I was comparing you with Uncle Sutherland."

"O! He will see diversities of operations enough, when he comes into his missionary life."

"So he used to say. And yet he had no fears of starting upon it. The whole sermon, this afternoon, set me to thinking of him. It was an appeal for the Church missions. But I need not tell you that. Were you there?"

Mr. Wilkie started, a little surprised. "At St. Matthew's?" said he. "No; I heard Mr. Osgood preach."

Margaret went on, — scarcely regarding his answer, — to speak of the sermon, which had been preached by a gentleman engaged in the Episcopal mission to Liberia. She had not known much of the Liberian colony before, and had been interested in the account he gave of that; still more so, that, in all his accounts of missionary privation, she was imagining her uncle's position in his new home, and wondering how far his condition was the same.

"My uncle once said to me," she said, "that the American Church had shown more zeal in its mission arrangements than it had ever done in England, where so much has been left to Dissenters, — as if we had no duty to perform but to ourselves. I remembered that remark of his, when it happened, that, on the first day that I was in an American Church, I heard such a mission appeal as I heard to-day. It will be a pleasure to study out what you have been doing here."

Mr. Wilkie made some answer, — Margaret scarcely heeded what. She was warmed by the feeling, which his zeal for the emigrant boy and this Liberian sermon had aroused, that at last she had found the Church, — her own dear Church, — Uncle Sutherland's Church — as hearty in its missions, at home and abroad, as even the Catholic church,

whose alacrity had so seduced her in those old days of danger. She went on to say,

"I so enjoyed every word of the service to-day! On ship-board it was not read. I had not heard it since we left Liverpool. And now, to think of it, going round the world, in one language and another! — the same prayer, and the same spirit of prayer, in one language and another. 'There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.'"

Mr. Wilkie sympathized with the enthusiastic girl. "I have a copy of the Liturgy," he said, "in Hebrew, as your Bishop Alexander has arranged it for the new church at Jerusalem."

"Have you?" cried she; "that is so pleasant! Those prayers, that we have so really *by heart*, uttered in those places, of all in the world, — Gethsemane, Zion itself, Bethlehem, where —" she stopped. She had been going to say "where they were first uttered." But she knew her zeal was going a little too far. She went back, therefore, to speak of Heber reading those prayers in India, her uncle in New Zealand, these zealous men, of whom she had heard, in Africa; and "I suppose," she added, "your emigrants in California, by this time."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Wilkie.

"Surely, surely," said Margaret, quite rapt in her theme, — "surely that service must satisfy any heart, — so simple, so faithful, so true, so venerable!"

"I suppose it satisfies almost any one who is satisfied with any form of worship," said her companion.

But Margaret did not observe the condition he added to his assent. Through the whole conversation, she was carrying along the impression, that, like herself, he was of the "Church of England."

After a pause, she added, "They did not read prayers at Mrs. Newton's, this morning."

"I am surprised at that. Something especial prevented it," he said.

"I was afraid, — I supposed, — in short, you know, customs vary; and I enjoy that calling together of the family to worship, in the morning, in a way which nothing would compensate me for."

"You may well say that," said he. "And that is my tenderest association with the Liturgy," he added. "We often use appropriate parts of it in our family worship at home."

"*Often!*" thought Margaret. She was a little surprised, but supposed she did not understand. As they walked on, she asked Mr. Wilkie who was the clergyman at Fairmeadow.

"Mr. Kavanagh; but he is now in Europe, and will not be home for some time. He will interest you. He was born in a Catholic family."

"Indeed," said Margaret, and again she was encouraged to remember the strength of this American branch of the church. "And your bishop?" she asked. "Are you of this diocese?"

At once the whole position of this conversation revealed itself to Mr. Wilkie. He saw that they had been playing at cross-purposes all along, and that Margaret had been expecting the enthusiasm which an Episcopalian would have shown about the English Liturgy, and the information which an Episcopalian would have given about the Episcopal missions abroad. The misunderstanding amused him a little, perhaps; but he hastened to bring it to an end. To her question as to his diocese and bishop, therefore, he answered, "Mr. Kavanagh is our bishop."

"What! — is Fairmeadow a cathedral town?"

"Fairmeadow, and the villages round it, are the whole of his diocese."

"How, — I don't understand you, — how many American bishops are there?"

"If you will believe me," answered he, perfectly seriously, "as many as there are parishes. I see that you do not understand me, — that we have misunderstood each other all along. You have supposed me, without my knowing it, to be a member of the Episcopal Church, — of the Church of England, as you would call it. You are mistaken. I am a member of the Church Universal, — of the general Church of Christ. If I was in England, you would call me a Dissenter. We do not use that word here, for reasons you will understand when you see how things are with us. When you spoke of the Liturgy with interest, I sympathized with you wholly. But we do not use it in Fairmeadow, in our church services. It did not occur to me that you supposed we did.

"The Episcopal bishop who has the oversight, under your forms, of the fifty or sixty Episcopal churches in Massachusetts, is Bishop Eastburn. He lives in Boston. The Catholic bishop, in whose charge are the Roman churches, is Bishop Fitzpatrick. The Methodist bishop, who has the oversight of more than either, is, I think, Bishop Waugh. All the other churches, some four-fifths of the whole number, are under their own charge. Each appoints their own minister, believing that he is the only bishop or overseer for them; and each is under its own supervision."

"Independents?" asked Margaret, after a pause.

"That is as good a name as any; your Uncle Sutherland would probably use that word."

This explanation troubled Margaret. After her sad enough experience with the Countess Novera, her uncle had shown to her, and she had seen, that the true way for an humble member of the Church to avoid alienation from it, was to avoid temptation. She had renounced her Catholic books, as well as her Catholic friends. Her uncle had advised her, and she had found rest and strength in following the counsel. She had meant to follow it in America. She was a Church-woman; she had no wish to leave the Church. She had meant to avoid temptation to leave it.

And now she found herself in the embarrassing position, of having accepted, and accepted heartily, even joyfully, the kindness, the good offices, of a man whose Christianity had been hearty enough for her to suppose him a "Churchman." He had proposed to her a visit to his home; she had made no objection to the proposal; and it appeared that that home was to be the home of a Dissenter.

She had enjoyed the idea of the visit. But she could not but remember that she had even more enjoyed the idea of a visit to Henningsly; and that afterwards she had trained herself to turn away in her walks even, if the turrets of Henningsly caught her eyes.

Ought not that be a warning to her before she went to Fairmeadow?

CHAPTER XII.

Sunday, at the Wilkies' house, was a day always calm and peaceful. One's remembrance of the day there was always as of a clear, sunny day. There are some places where Sunday always wears this association. One forgets

that the weather can ever be unpleasant, because everything within and without is in harmony with a bright, clear day of sunshine. On the Sunday passed by Mr. Wilkie at New York, as just described, Mr. Newstead took his book into the woods for the day, and Nature did seem to invite to peace and quiet. About noon, he returned, looking hot and sleepy; and he dozed, through the afternoon, on the porch.

Anna and Gertrude were to go early to the village. Everything about the farm wore a Sunday air. Even the busy, clattering fowls had put on a decent sort of demeanor, and moved majestically about. It was a warm autumn morning, and the door stood open from the porch, and the sun shone broadly in. Anna wished to be early at church, on account of the Sunday-school, and Gertrude accompanied her. The short ride there was most quiet and pleasant. The village street was quite untenanted. On the way, Anna spoke of the Sunday-school.

"I have had a class there, a long time; but it has been with fear and trembling. A teacher may sometimes do as much for ill as good; and I have felt as if my powers might be very weak. But yet, I wish so much to do something for children, to make the day different to them from other days! I feel so thankful for my associations with Sunday! They have never been of a sad or gloomy nature. It has always been a pleasure to me to read books of a different class from what I would read other days. The circumstances of the day are so much more quiet than those of other days, that I can read a sort of book that requires more thought, — something that, in the whirl of other days, one does not get time for, or find the place for."

There was a grave-yard around the church. It was still early, and Anna and Gertrude lingered a while there, before

going into the church. It was a beautiful spot. Some drooping willows hung over the grassy bank. They walked there, without speaking. Gertrude knew what associations Anna had with this place, and it carried her back to the thought of the most bitterly sad moments of her own life.

Some of the children were beginning to assemble, and they turned to go into the church. Anna said,

> "'The dead in Christ, — they rest in hope,
> And o'er their sleep sublime
> The shadow of the steeple moves
> From morn till vesper chime.'

I love those lines very much. I can scarcely tell why I like them so well; for, indeed, I do not believe that our loved ones sleep here. Still, it is a pleasant thought, to feel that over the forms we have loved so well there is spreading so blessed an influence."

Anna went to her class of little girls, and Gertrude joined the young people who formed Mr. Harrod's Bible class.

They were reading from the chapter in which were these words: "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Mr. Harrod said these words had been quoted, to show that there was such a thing as death-bed repentance. Some one asked, if it could not also prove that there was such a thing as a sudden change of heart; and spoke of certain instances, where some great startling event had so worked upon the heart of one who had never been religiously inclined before, as to give an utterly new impulse, and create what might be called a change of heart.

Mr. Harrod said that he believed that there might be such an awakening of the heart. But, he continued, — "In the length of our lives, we need many such awakenings. We but pass out from one series of temptations, to enter into

another, perhaps of a higher grade. There is danger of our again falling asleep, and we need to be roused anew. A young person enters life with a proud feeling of independence, as if he stood strong enough in his own strength. Something comes to him suddenly, to teach him his dependence upon a higher power; and he learns a new lesson, that teaches him to cry, 'Lead Thou me on;' he hears a voice crying to him, at home, in the wilderness, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' But, as I said before, these words must lead him not merely to lay aside his old sins, but give him strength to meet his new temptations. Therefore, we can scarcely say, with joy, of any time or hour, we have experienced a change of heart, unless we feel sure that it is to lead to a growth in religious power. We know not how strong, or how firm, are the resolutions that this hour of promise forms. If, then, it is delayed till the hour of death, there is only one Power that can say whether it is the true repentance of the heart. We cannot ourselves know it; we shall see standing by our bedside no living Christ, to say, 'This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.'

"It was one of the gifts of the purity of Christ's character, that he could see deeply into the hearts of others. We are told, 'that he knew what was in man.' Of the lives of those who suffered with Jesus, we know nothing; nor how deep was the crime for which they were paying a penalty. We only know, that, to add to the bitterness of the insults heaped upon Jesus, he was placed between them, and that he might 'make his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.'

"But, we may believe that Jesus, the clearness of whose mental vision was blinded by no low prejudice, no veil of selfish passion, could read how guilty were the motives that

led to the crime that brought his fellow-sufferer by his side, and how earnest was his repentance, and how true was his faith. For us, we can have no such excuse as this malefactor. All our lives have been sounding in our ears, and calling to our hearts, the words of the forerunner of Jesus, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' We have heard, besides, the pleading voice of Jesus, himself, — 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden;' and then he adds, 'and I will give you rest.' Perhaps the true meaning of that word *rest* may never come to us, till we hear with it, from above, the words, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.'"

As Anna and Gertrude left the church, after the services, they met Miss Nelly Stevens. She was with her sister Prudence, and was anxious they should pass the hours between the morning and afternoon services at her house. But Anna had promised to go to Mrs. Harrod's. She left Gertrude there, in the afternoon. It was the first Sunday Gertrude had been to church since her illness, and in the quiet of Mrs. Harrod's white-curtained chamber, she thought over the sermon she had heard from Mr. Harrod in the morning.

As Mrs. Wilkie, with Anna and Gertrude, drove home in the afternoon, Gertrude spoke of the morning's Sunday-school lesson.

"As Mr. Harrod spoke these words, 'This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,' I could not help recalling those other words, in the parable of the rich man, that were said to him, after he had laid up much goods, — 'This night shalt thy soul be required of thee!' How terrible do these last words seem! As if they ought to haunt us more, and ought, indeed, to waken us out from our worldly visions, and dreams of earthly happiness."

"They do, indeed, come to us, sometimes, with a sound of terror, and we wonder that we do not listen to them oftener."

"It may be right," said Mrs. Wilkie, "to recall them often; to bring often before our minds the foolishness of our ways in this life; but, do you know, my dear girls, the older I grow, the more I dwell upon God's mercy, rather than upon any fears of His justice?—and, at last, I find I cannot easily separate His mercy from His justice. When I think of my hardships, I am filled with sadness and anxiety; and then I feel that it is only God's mercy that can bring me any comfort, when that time shall come that I shall look back upon the deeds I have done, and the life I have passed through. As we see now how nature still hangs a beauty and a glory over even the decay of these dying leaves, so I have a firm faith, that, out of my poor, faltering soul, He will, perhaps, bring forth some good. And I feel how truly His love must be as great as His power, and how He must testify His power only in acts of love."

CHAPTER XIII.

MARGARET would have hardly been so much troubled at the prospect of visiting in a Dissenting family, but for one or two experiences which had happened to her on the voyage.

After her sea-sickness had passed, and she and her friend had been able to enjoy the open air on deck, they had become acquainted, in that charming intimacy of sea-life, with a family of Friends, or Quakers, returning to Pennsyl-

vania, after a journey in Europe. The extreme intelligence and quickness of Hester and Ruth Withers, — the bright, kindly spirit of their brother George, — and the perfect, the unfailing self-control of their father and mother, and of Sister Alice, their aunt, — first attracted Margaret's attention; and afterwards, as they extended towards the two lonely ladies every kindness that they could think of, and she became more and more intimate with them, these qualities entirely won her affection.

Surely, there never were people who had less cant in their religion, — that is to say, in their lives, — than have the Withers family. And, all the while, when you are with them, you feel that the spirit of everything said or done is pure as purity; you know, all the while, that their faith is living faith; you see, all the while, that presence of Jesus, of which, excepting in the most intimate discourse, they say so little.

I think it was Mr. Withers with whom Margaret first became acquainted. The ladies of his family were still imprisoned in their state-rooms, when he, one day, had an opportunity to render Margaret some little service, which led them on to a long two hours walk together. He was so kind, so friend-like, at once so fatherly and brotherly, that Margaret felt at once that she should need no other personal protector on her voyage. It was her first acquaintance with one of the Society of Friends. There was a charm to her cordial heart in the ease with which he called her "Margaret," without be-Missing her, or be-Percivaling her; and so it was, that, before the other ladies were well enough to leave their rooms, he and she were the closest of friends.

And when Hester Withers appeared, a little weak and pale after the sickness she had passed through, it was so easy to learn to love, — yes, and to admire her. At first, she

enjoyed leaning on Margaret's stronger arm, to receive the support of her better trained feet, as they walked; then, as she herself grew strong, Margaret felt the influence of her thoroughly conscientious, godly character; — found herself consulting Hester in great things or in little; — and so they read together, sang together, — for the young Friends will sing, now-a-days, — worked together; yes, lived together. Hester Withers is so modest a person, that she hardly can go into a circle of people, however dear to her, without a deep blush; and yet, so conscientious is she, and so willing to trust her conscience, that she is firm, utterly unwavering, where it leads her; and, for all the blush, there is no hesitation when she says what she thinks, or when she does what she feels should be done. So she becomes quite a queen, in her way, in her little circle. The circle knows it, or not, as may happen. Surely no one would regret it; for Hester is so kind-hearted, and so unselfish, that this influence, based simply on her clearness of perception and truth of character, never pained any one, and never can.

Hester was, perhaps, the first friend of her own age whom Margaret had ever had, with whom every circumstance so combined that they had no hesitation, no uneasiness at all, in cementing their intimacy, from its very first breath, by distinctly religious ties and associations. The talks which Margaret had had with Hester's father were serious. The first time Hester came on deck, and joined their walk, Margaret and Mr. Withers were talking of the "Remedies against Impatience" in the "Holy Dying," — a hand-book equally familiar to all three of them. And again, all the circumstances of passenger life helped them to keep on that perfectly natural footing, where, each with each, two earnest souls do not fear to speak with each other of that which is dearest to them both.

Now, although with her uncle, and lately with her younger sisters, Margaret had known constantly the pleasures and the worth of mutual religious support, she had never, except in those sad, dangerous days with the Countess, taken just this satisfaction, from the very beginning, with one of her own age and sex.

As the voyage went on, the two girls had become inseparable. Their parting was a sad one, but a hopeful one; for Margaret had promised to visit the Witherses, at Germantown, and to write them at once, that Hester might write to her.

Margaret had enjoyed this blessed friendship almost without a drawback. Yet, there were times when, alone in her state-room, she wondered to think how little she had known of the Society of Friends. She remembered, in her journal, a passage, which she turned back to, and read, more amazed than amused; though there was a vein of amusement, as she thought of the flippancy with which she had written, when she knew so little. The passage was, —

"I am a Christian; but so are Independents, Baptists, *Quakers*, Primitive Methodists, Wesleyans, Swedenborgians, — yet, what communion can there be between me and them?" *

She took her pen, and wrote in the margin, — "Great God! can there be closer communion than between Hester and me, as we prayed to-night together?" And the old entry in the journal would scarcely have troubled her, — she would have looked on it only as a girlish silliness, such as journals will show, — but that, as she turned over its pages, she came to these words of her dear uncle's: —

Margaret had said to him that "All Christians form but one body, — the Epistle to the Ephesians says so."

* The passage is copied in Margaret Percival, vol. I., p. 113.

He had replied, — "It says that we are to endeavor to keep 'the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; because there is one body, and one spirit, and one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism.' Now, look at Unitarians, denying the divinity of our Lord, and calling themselves Christians; look at Baptists, enforcing adult baptism alone; look at Wesleyans, and Independents, and the countless sects of the present day, making both the sacraments mere signs; and all differing from each other, and from the Church, in their form of government; — where can the 'one body' be found among them?" *

Margaret remembered this troubled conversation too well to need to read her long report of it. She remembered that her uncle had said, — "God forbid that I, or any human being, should presume to confine the mercies of Christ within the strict limits of the visible Church." That was so kind of him, — so like him. Still, he had been eager that all others should be brought within "the English Church," because it had certainty on its side. And Margaret was distinctly conscious that Mr. Withers and Hester, and all of them, felt that they had certainty on their side, — what was worse to her, she did not wonder that they felt so, — while she was not in the least shaken in her own attachment to her own Church. Nay, at bottom, as she proved her heart that night, she felt that she had not once made an effort, nor wanted to make an effort, to bring Hester within the pale of "the Church of England." It had not occurred to her that she ought to, till this conversation of her uncle's was called up to her. Now, whether he would not think she ought? What would he have done? But if she should, why was not she playing the Countess Novera over again,

* Margaret Percival, I., 122.

to Hester's Margaret Percival? Margaret was troubled, that night; and went to bed to dream of her Uncle Sutherland arguing with a New Zealand chief, who turned round of a sudden, and proved to be Father Andrea, in disguise; and, indeed, awoke Margaret, by suddenly changing into William Penn.

The bright air of the next day, and Hester's pleasant face, pushed away the whole trouble; and Margaret resolved not to think of it again, till she should visit Hester, in Germantown. Perhaps, before that time, she could consult some clergyman who could tell her her duty.

The other experience of the voyage which had given Margaret occasion for troubled thought, as to duty, tended, as it happened, to the same question. One disagreeable afternoon, quite a party of the passengers, unable to be on deck, were assembled, talking together, at one end of the ship's saloon. With Mr. Withers's family were Margaret and Mrs. Winterton, and one or two others, among whom was a young gentleman, a Moravian preacher. They all felt an interest in him, and, indeed, well acquainted with him; for he had, every Sunday, performed the public religious services of the ship; and there was a simple zeal in his whole manner which had won upon them all. This afternoon, he was giving them some account of the beauties of Bethlehem, the home to which he was returning, from a visit to some of the communities of the Moravian brethren in Germany. His simple account of the simple life of the brethren and sisters in Bethlehem seemed almost like a page from an imagined history of those early Christian times which it is so natural to suppose were unbroken peace and beauty; and death there, in the midst of friends, seemed so calm, — as he described the parting of some who must have been very dear to him, — and that funeral music, on the wings of

which the soul might be wafted to heaven, seemed such a relief from the almost affected sadness of some rituals, that they listened to him, as he passed into a longer account of the Moravian brotherhood there, without interrupting him for an instant. Margaret's imaginative spirit was on fire again; and she was relieved to see, that, in this very heart of Protestantism, there could be rituals so touching and so real. They led him on, from point to point of his life among the brethren; and it was in this long conversation, that he came to speak of his last voyage to America, which had been three years before.

He had been to London, at that time, it seemed, as a member of a noble convention, which had assembled in the hope of promoting an "Evangelical Alliance" among Christians, of whatever (Protestant) sect. He did not say much about the convention itself. Margaret fancied he was not wholly pleased with some of its arrangements, or their results. But of his voyage home he gave a very touching account. There were on board a large number of the delegates, he said, together with a great many persons who had probably never heard of the convention before they embarked. "But it pleased the Lord," he added, "to show us what was the true Gospel alliance, — the alliance of heart with heart, and prayer with prayer; for, in the terrible storm of our passage," — the captain nodded as he said, "terrible," — "we were really all in imminent danger. And when the spirit moved some one to ask God's blessing in the saloon, where we were all huddled together, did it not become a church? And when a brother, of I know not what form, read the Scripture, did we not all take in the Bread of Life? And then, when bread was brought, and wine, and, thinking that we should break bread no more, nor drink wine, save in the immediate presence of the

Lamb, — when so, men and women of every creed, or of no written creed, joined together at the table, which our Lord in God's providence there set in order, — oh! was not He in the midst of us, though we had no covenant obligation between us, but the common peril and the common faith of that ever blessed hour?" The young man's voice faltered, and he dropped his face in his hands. Indeed, no one spoke. No one could speak.

Nor was it till many days after, — indeed, not till the very evening when she was looking over that old journal, that it occurred to Margaret to ask whether it had been quite right to use the Sacrament in the manner the young preacher had described. She did not know, indeed, whether the Moravian Community was really a church, "descended from the apostles, and adhering to the true faith."* She could not remember whether her uncle had ever spoken of it to her. That question did not much trouble her, however. If she ever arrived in America, she would ask some teacher who would tell her. But it was clear enough, that, in the scene in the tempest-tossed ship's saloon, there had been no question at all whether the different churches were real churches or not. And more, she felt that, as she had listened to the description of that scene, she had thoroughly acquiesced in what they did there. It had seemed the true demand of God's Providence at the time.

How she wished Uncle Sutherland were with her! If she could only ask him!

At all events, she was delighted with the Christian life of the young Moravian. It was through his daily visits in the steerage that they made acquaintance first with the wants of the poor Irish people there. She was quite sure his must

* See Margaret Percival, I., 122.

be a real church, descended from the apostles, and adhering to the true faith.

She looked out *Moravian Brethren* in the Cyclopædia, in the cabin library. There it said that Count Zinzendorf admitted into his Communities Romanists, Calvinists, and Lutherans, the only sects known in his day, on an equal footing. But that was long ago. She thought it must have changed since.

She had, however, the set of questions which this incident and her attachment for Hester had started on her mind, on the Sunday when she took that long walk with Mr. Wilkie, which we have described. At first, in that walk, while she thought him a "Churchman," she had thought he would be, perhaps, a good person to ask advice of. It was this half-formed intention which had given her more confusion, when she discovered her error.

The reader will, perhaps, excuse so long a retrospect as this, because it accounts not only for Margaret's confusion at that time, but for her trouble of mind, the next day, as to what her duty was in regard to Mr. Wilkie's invitation. She met him on Monday, with some distrust, not of him, but of what she ought to do. She was glad when a visit which she made with him to the poor Leeds woman and her children passed, Monday afternoon, without any distinct allusion to the plan of her going with him. Tuesday, she consulted Mrs. Newton, her hostess, as to the possibility of her finding some neighborhood where she could employ herself in teaching, surrounded wholly by influences of the Episcopal Church. But Mrs. Newton was from a part of New York where that church had no wide hold, — she was herself, as her husband was, of the Dutch Reformed Communion; and the only suggestion she could make was, that,

perhaps in some southern state, on the plantation of some gentleman who should be himself an Episcopalian, Margaret would be best satisfied. But this plan Margaret shrank from.

While she was doubting, whether or no her uncle would think it wrong for her to expose herself to a temptation so very slight as a visit to Mr. Wilkie's surely was, she received the following note from Mrs. Wilkie. It put Margaret more at ease than all her meditations had done.

MRS. WILKIE TO MARGARET PERCIVAL.

"*Fairmeadow, October,* 1849.

"My Dear Miss Percival: —

"I am very glad to hear, from my husband, of your safe arrival in America; — more glad that he has claimed your first months here for a visit with us. I write to join my request with his, that you will not hesitate to let him bring you here, on his return. You will not find us quite strangers, for my daughter Anna, and her friend Gertrude, have, as well as I, all been acquainted with some parts of your English life. Let me assure you that we shall all exert ourselves to make you feel at home in New England.

"As we hope to have a long visit from you, my dear Miss Percival, you will not think that I am too motherly if I add, — what, indeed, Mr. Wilkie may have said to you, — that we are within an hour's drive of the Episcopal church, in Beech Woods. I know how much you will prize its services, and that you would not feel quite at home with us, if you could not enjoy them regularly.

"One of the pleasures we can promise you is, an acquaintance and frequent opportunity to meet with Mr. Ross, its rector.

* * * * * *

"Truly yours,

"Anna Wilkie."

This last clause, about the church at Beech Woods, quite decided Margaret. It would be silly to waver, when Mr. and Mrs. Wilkie were so kind. There was no deviation from her uncle's advice. Indeed, was it not possible that Mrs. Wilkie was herself a "Church-woman?" Margaret read the note again and again.

When Mr. Wilkie next called, she concluded her arrangements for leaving New York with him. And on Friday they made the journey to Fairmeadow.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Now, Lizzie, what shall we play? The whole afternoon to ourselves! What shall we do with it? Let us go up into the woods, behind the house, and play entirely by ourselves. No Miss Eliza Spenser, no Maria, to interrupt us."

"How I wish there were a little brook running through the woods, as there is at home! Then we could make little boats, and the brook, we could play, was the sea."

"If we could only be in our home again, and Aunt Clara with us, and Arthur, and George, and Gertrude, back again!"

"Let us play this rose-bush is Gertrude, and that seringa-tree Aunt Clara, and those two large hollyhocks shall be the Miss Spensers, — only the Miss Spensers are always talking, and the hollyhocks are very silent."

"But I like Maria Spenser, and I think she may have been right when she told me Bessie was too ugly to bring into the parlor. I would not have a new doll, if I could;

but then their parlor always looks so nice, it might look rather badly to see poor Bessie, with her broken nose, sitting on the corner of the sofa. I only wish they would not, both of them, be eternally reading or studying, forever. Even Aunt Clara, who, I am sure, is as wise as anybody, used to find time to laugh and play."

"And she could talk just as well while she was sewing as if she were not. But, when Maria Spenser once begins counting her crochet, you can't expect an answer from her for half an hour; and she never seems to get anything done, either."

"But then, Lizzie, it is not right to talk so of the Spensers; though Mrs. Spenser is not our aunt, she acts kind enough for one, and likes to hear us call her Aunt Spenser. How good she was, when I felt sick, the other day!"

"If she had not set you to reading somebody's physiology, as soon as you were well enough to hold up your head!"

"Aunt Clara said she thought we should learn a great deal while we were here, and that we should get to love them all very much, and that it was very kind in them to have us come here to stay the whole winter."

"I think I should rather not to be as learned as Miss Eliza Spenser, though people say she is very handsome; and I wish they would not make us sit in their nice parlor all day long."

"Well, Lizzie, don't let us sit talking here, using up our time. Do you know, I think I could get up into this crooked old tree, its branches are so low. I will clamber up, and pull you along after me. And let us sit here among the leaves, and we can watch the birds in the trees round about. And, Lizzie, you shall tell a story. What nice stories Aunt Clara used to tell us! But you shall tell a story now, — all about a knight — "

"Such a splendid knight! He wore an armor, all of bright, flashing gold. He set out, one day, and mounted his black steed, and thought he would go out to try his fortunes. His way led him along through a dark forest, and presently he came to a deep stream. He had just crossed it, on a narrow bridge, when he thought he heard voices. They seemed to come from the bushes round him. He listened again, and found all the little hips and haws on the rose-bushes round were singing—"

Meanwhile, the Misses Spenser were discussing their plans for the evening.

"I don't think, Maria, that I can possibly go in, in the omnibus, and sit through The Enchanted Beauty with the children. And I am quite sure Mr. Murray will have tickets for us to go to the concert with him, this evening."

Mr. Murray was the gentleman to whom Miss Spenser was engaged to be married. There was no prospect of their marriage taking place at present, as it was to be delayed until Mr. Murray should be settled in some lucrative position.

"Then, Eliza, I do not see why it is not best to take up with Mr. Ashton's proposition, and let him come out, and take the girls, with Arthur and George."

"I should not think Mr. Ashton would approve of taking Lizzie to such a place, she is such an excitable little person. But, I suppose it would be impossible to separate the two girls; and Mr. Ashton can judge for himself."

The delight of Agnes and Lizzie was unbounded when they found they were indeed to go, with their father and brothers, to see The Enchanted Beauty. They were all ready at an early hour, and were quite prepared when their father came to take them to the omnibus that was to carry them into town.

The Misses Spenser, in their way, enjoyed their evening's entertainment.

"How glorious!" said Mr. Murray, at the close of the overture to the Midsummer Night's Dream, — "how glorious such music is! Most especially so, when one has been shut up, as I have, all day. It seems to bring with it a refreshing, cooling air. It exhilarates and elevates one's mind, and reminds us of something higher than this every-day world, and all its trifling concerns."

Eliza was studying the pattern of a collar in front of her. The work upon it wound in and out in a most intricate way, and yet she fancied she could catch it. She looked up, however, with a thoughtful smile, — for her study had given her face a thoughtful expression, —

"It is indeed so," she said.

"And now we are to have a song. If it were not for the chorus at the end, I should propose our going away now. One has such a confused feeling, after listening to such a variety of kinds of music."

"Indeed, I am so tired, I would be glad to go now; but then Maria would not think of going. And she wants, too, to speak to Mrs. Pearson, after the concert is over."

The next morning after the concert, the Misses Spenser and Agnes and Lizzie sat together in the parlor. Eliza, with paper and pencil, was drawing out the pattern of the "love of a collar;" Maria had a volume of the Queens of England, — she was to finish it, if possible, that morning, to send in to the Pearsons. Agnes and Lizzie, in a low tone, had been living over again the delights of the night before. Now they were tired, and wanted some active amusement.

"Dear Cousin Eliza, will you take your chair opposite Maria's? Lizzie and I want to play omnibus. You need not stir, you know; we won't clutter up the room; for the

table, with its six legs, is to be the pair of horses; and Lizzie is to be the old lady that keeps getting in and out, and I am to be the omnibus-boy. We won't come to you for money at all; we will play you have paid."

"My dear Agnes, how can I move? Don't you see I must have my foot on this footstool, or I can't draw my pattern? And, talking to me, you just put my ideas out of my head."

"Perhaps Maria will move," said Agnes.

But no; Maria was too deep in her book to hear the entreaties, which had now grown quite faint. Agnes, in despair, went to find Aunt Spenser. Aunt Spenser had promised to give her a piece of velvet to make a pincushion with, for Arthur. She left Lizzie sitting dreaming in the easy-chair.

That will be a very pretty collar you are working upon, Eliza, and it makes very pretty, lady-like work in your hands; and I have no doubt you will finish it very quickly, and it will be quite right for your friends to praise your skill. But I am afraid you have forgotten your fear of yesterday, when you dreaded that the excitement of seeing the Enchanted Beauty should be too much for little Lizzie. If the thought would only cross your mind again, perhaps you might lay aside your work, and, seeing her with her head leaning on her little hands, and her brow drawn together, you might perhaps arouse her from those dreams she is wandering in. Or you, Maria, might lay aside your book, and say a bright, cheering word to the over-excited, tired Lizzie. What good does it do you to know whether Matilda of Scotland reigned before Matilda of Flanders, or who was the wife of Stephen? I fear me, by next week, you will have forgotten all. Not that I would have you, for that reason, throw aside the book; but, while you have this little Lizzie by your side, you might, perhaps, have

something better to do. As for the book, it may prove very good reading for you. It was written by a woman; — there is something to excite you. A woman could actually disentangle and look clearly into this twisted chain of kings and queens, and bring down even before your eyes the lives of women who lived so long ago, and such a different life too. There is something else to rouse you. These Matildas, who had not the liberty you have of entering libraries, listening to high and intellectual conversation, going to concerts, — they passed their monotonous lives in weaving tapestry, — they could find nothing better to do. It was a great thing to find so much for their fingers to do; as for their minds, as they sat before their tapestry frames, hour after hour, no one has asked them what they did with them. And now, with the addition two or three centuries can make to your resources, you will turn from your book to your tapestry, and set your whole heart upon finishing "that leaf" before dinner.

And poor Lizzie! Agnes returned with her velvet and card-board, and was about seating herself where she could make as little "clutter" as possible, to cut out and arrange her pincushion. She saw Lizzie sitting just where she left her, and she knew she ought to do something to rouse her. "Lizzie, suppose you begin that letter to Gertrude? Aunt Spenser gave me a sheet of paper, the other day, for it, and told me we might sit at her little table, in the corner, any time, to write it. We will whisper, so that we need not disturb the girls; and I will bring my work, and sit by your side."

CHAPTER XV.

LIZZIE ASHTON TO GERTRUDE ASHTON.

"My dear Gertrude," ran Lizzie's letter, "I believe Agnes wrote you, some weeks ago, we had arrived at the Spensers. I thought I would write you too, to tell you what we are doing. We like the Spensers very well. They say Eliza Spenser is very handsome; but both Eliza and Maria are very much grown up. And I almost hope Agnes and I, when we grow up to be young ladies, will not be just so. But I suppose all young ladies must sing a great deal, and read a great deal, and have very little to say to children, like Agnes and me. That is not your way, to be sure; but Agnes and I think you are very different from most young ladies, and we remember what frolics you sometimes had with us at Elmwood. And we wish we could go back there, and have some pleasant games with you. Agnes says she would be very careful not to upset the ink over your poetry-book; for we have been learning a great deal, since we have been here, to be neat and careful. But we do have pleasant times here. I must not forget to tell you, how we went to The Enchanted Beauty, last night. But Agnes said I must not fill my whole letter with it, as perhaps I should, if I had begun with it. I believe you do not care much for such amusements, but I do think you would like to have seen such splendid palaces, and pretty peasant girls, and then real flying fairies. I did wish, almost, I were a princess, even if I were enchanted, that I might sleep on such a glorious throne, with all the retainers about, and ladies playing upon lutes, and everything shining in jewels and gold. And the princess was a very beautiful lady. If we were sitting on

the grassy bank, at Elmwood, I would tell you the whole story, and what a dreadful dragon there was. Arthur and George laughed at me, because I was afraid of him; and, indeed, the knight, though he looked so small, conquered him. For Arthur and George were with us, and so was papa. It has taken me so long to write this, that I must stop. Since I began, I have left off to eat dinner; and now it is afternoon, and I must bid you good-by. Maria Spenser said that I might put in my letter that we were very good girls. We do not have much studying, this winter, as papa did not think it was best. We recite French, twice a week, to Eliza Spenser, and read history with Maria. And Mrs. Spenser fits our work, and sees to our sewing."

Mr. Murray came in, in the afternoon, to propose that Agnes and Lizzie should go with him to a children's party, given by a little niece of his.

Mrs. Spenser thought that as the girls had been out the evening before, it might be better for them to stay at home.

"But this is not a party. I ought not to call it so. The children are to have a frolic, and play some games, and they can come home early. And, Eliza and Maria, you will come too; every one enjoys a children's frolic."

"I have no objection," said Eliza, "if you will take the responsibility. Now, this morning, I could not make Agnes pay any attention to her French verb. I dare say her mind was full of last night's excitement."

"But, dear Cousin Eliza, I have been studying it hard, this afternoon, and I shall say it perfectly, to-morrow."

"Mr. Ashton does not wish the girls to be kept studying, this winter; you know he said they must have recreation."

"I have no objection to this afternoon," said Mrs. Spenser. "It is the principle that I object to. I think Mr.

Ashton is wrong, and that such a winter will just unsettle the girls' minds."

"Now, Mrs. Spenser, I am going to disagree with you entirely; and I think Eliza and Maria want a winter's recreation, too."

"Now, you are too bad," said Eliza. "It was only the other day, you wanted to set me to work. You talked to me about disciplining my mind. I declare, Charles, you have such magnificent ideas, and strange notions, it is hard to keep up with them."

"I proposed studying German, to you, because I thought it would be good for both our minds, to devote them to a study as difficult as that of the German language. I think it would do us all good to work harder, and then to play more earnestly. Instead of proposing to me a game of chess, in the evening, when your mind is wearied with the duties of the day, and my head is filled with long lists of figures, and running on prices, it would be better for both of us, and Maria, too, to take a romp with the children."

"Yes, yes!" cried Agnes and Lizzie, rushing about the room. "Let us have one now. Mr. Murray, you shall be old man in the castle!"

"Run up stairs, Agnes, Lizzie, if you want to be ready for Mr. Murray's party. I will go with you," said Mrs. Spenser.

"I have been speaking, Eliza, partly, on account of those two children. It pains me to see Lizzie sitting with her mind evidently filled with only dreams and fancies. She needs to be roused, and to have her daily life made playful and joyous. Even Agnes looks restrained, as she sits with her work in her hands, and her eyes following the motions of the birds on the trees by the window. But it is not on their account, alone, I am speaking so seriously."

"Ah, well, what would you say on mine? I am accustomed, Charles, to an occasional lecture from you. I will allow they come rare enough for me to be willing to submit."

"You have been, all your life, accustomed to having stated hours for all your different occupations. This has given you a certain decision of character, and a power of dividing your time methodically. And you rightly feel you have an advantage over those who have been leading a chaotic sort of life, and don't know now where to put this piece of an hour, or that corner of a day, because it is a piece of time they had not calculated upon, and that they do not know what to do with. The circumstances of your life have taught you a noble lesson, and you have learnt it nobly, too, — how to take care of the minutes, that the hours may take care of themselves. Now, suddenly, you have a new opportunity for discipline; that is, in the arrival of these children here. Now, you have an opportunity for the discipline of interruption. All these hoarded hours are broken in upon."

"That is just it. Charles, it is you who have taught me the value of these hours; and I cannot agree that I have learnt my lesson well. I do see and acknowledge the usefulness of having my time apportioned for certain purposes; then, what am I to do with these interruptions? Indeed, what are the children to learn, if they see my time wasted, — a piece of work begun, without my having the time to finish it, — or some useful book begun, and hanging on, day after day! I say again, Charles, that you found me leading a very useless sort of life; now I am awakened to the desire of doing something to improve myself, to enlighten my mind. I see how little I know, especially when I hear you talk of things which, before, I have never conceived of; and I feel as if I ought to give every moment to laying up

some store in my mind. Even in that, my courage fails, and I sink back often into some useless occupation. When my mind does get braced up to some higher employment, what am I to do, when one of these interruptions comes?"

"Welcome it, smile upon it, and, especially if it comes in the shape of one of these bright joyous girls, embrace it as a heavenly messenger! The reason why your mind, at times, sinks back as you say it does, is because it needs this relaxation. It cannot bear this constant bracing, and you must give it a change of treatment. You must teach your mind to love your book, to be filled with what is in it while it lies before your eyes; and then, when one of these interruptions comes, lay down your book directly, laugh and talk with this person who has opportunely come to rouse you from over-study, and have a bright glance for whoever it may be. And now, on with your bonnet and shawl, and let us go and learn of these little ones how to be gay and joyous and grateful. Let us grow younger with them, and not grow old with the world. All these languages that we study, one heaped upon the other, they are all dead languages, if we have not first learned how to use our own, gayly and cheerfully, with bright, happy thoughts bursting from our lips, and dancing on our tongues."

CHAPTER XVI.

Mrs. Spenser's character was one of great energy. She had the gift of concentrating her powers. The first branch of industry which she taught her daughters was that of sewing, in all its forms. At that time, the resource of reading was entirely forbidden. To read a story-book was con-

sidered a wicked waste of time. Every amusement in some way introduced the occupation of the needle, and she used every effort to throw a charm around it. As her daughters grew older, a literary mania seized upon Mrs. Spenser. She had a passion for lectures; and Eliza and Maria zealously attended every course of lectures that the neighboring town offered them. Their time was carefully apportioned out; Maria sat a certain number of hours at the piano, and gained such skill in her performance there, that one wished only a breath of life and animation to be poured in upon her, and awake the formal mechanical sounds into music. Mrs. Spenser never wished her daughters to consider their education completed; they were to turn every thought, to give up every moment, to forming an intellectual fabric of great perfection.

It was a matter of some surprise, when Eliza Spenser's engagement to Mr. Murray first came out. It surprised much Eliza's friends. They had always thought that in time she would form an engagement with Hubert Spenser. Hubert was a distant connection of this branch of the Spenser family, and had always been much at home in their family circle. Maria wondered much that her sister could turn her back upon Hubert Spenser, he was so very handsome. It had always pleased Maria to have him their devoted attendant at all public places. He looked so well with Eliza, everybody remarked what a handsome couple they formed. To be sure, just now, he had nothing to live upon. But no more had Mr. Murray. Mr. Murray, who was scarcely an inch taller than Eliza herself, and whom no one would think of marking in a public assembly! A kind, pleasant face he had, to be sure; but, then, commonplace. Commonplace he certainly looked, by the side of Hubert. Maria had often remarked, with pleasure, in walking down

Washington-street, behind Hubert and Eliza, how everybody turned to look again at them. It was not so when they went about with Mr. Murray. They had more conversation, to be sure, — Mr. Murray was always lively and animated; but, then, Maria always thought much of appearances.

The same surprise affected, too, Mr. Murray's friends. They wondered how he could fancy one of the Spensers. Eliza, especially, who bore, they thought, that kind of inanimate beauty that chills. What was going to become of all his warmth of feeling, that demanded so much in return; of that passionate admiration he had always expressed for woman, — a true woman?

And what had led Mr. Murray to Eliza Spenser? Perhaps, after all, with all his strength of character, and self-control, he had gone so far as to be led away by mere outward, personal beauty. Or, perhaps, he saw a little deeper, and was interested in watching the struggle of one just making an effort to keep out from the sea of admiration, towards which a strong current was setting. He had a great many theories and fancies, — his friends said he was very visionary; perhaps he was so, when he thought he saw in himself a power to stretch forth a saving hand. Eliza and Maria had received from their mother one inheritance, — a love of a fine outward appearance, and great gratification in cold admiration. Perhaps Maria possessed these in the strongest degree, and was more flattered when she drew her shawl around her at some public entertainment, conscious of the many glances that were thrown admiringly towards her, from people whom she had never seen before, might never see again, than she would have been with one word of encouragement from mother or sister. But Mr. Murray's influence upon Eliza, — that was a question time was to

decide. And time had in one way shown this, — that she had some influence over him; for the interest that led him first to watch her struggling after something higher than admiration, deepened so far that he offered her love, and Mr. Murray and Eliza were engaged to be married.

Some few friends were assembled at Mrs. Spenser's. Agnes and Lizzie had been despatched to bed. Maria had just been playing a magnificent piece, with brilliant variations, and conversation was renewed.

"O, Mr. Murray," said one, "do you not think it would be charming to have such a journey to the Midnight Sun as Miss Bremer tells about? And such an expedition might really be got up here."

"But, don't you know," said Maria, "what a particular charm there was hung over the mountain all the party went to? All the gentlemen, you know, offered themselves to some lady."

"Ah, well, Miss Maria," said Mr. Leonards, "if our party were only well enough selected —"

"But why," said Mr. Murray, "do you want to go so far, just to see the sun rise and set? I have seen young ladies sit buried deep in some work or book, when a gorgeous sunset lay not more than ten minutes' walk away from them."

"You will sometimes be provokingly matter of fact!" said Maria.

"But marvellous romances," said Mr. Leonards, "can arise from even sunsets here, witness —"

"I won't have anything, however, Maria," said Mr. Murray, "to say against travelling, in any direction, or in any form. And I will agree with you, that one may enjoy, in travelling, plenty of romance. After one is shut up in a railroad car, for instance, one has seldom anything more pressing than to let one's imagination wander about one's

companions, with which the car is filled. In the course of some hours' journey, one has grown deeply interested in the private history of the dramatis personæ. We wonder where each one came from, — where that pretty girl opposite is going, — what this elderly lady is going to do with so many bundles, or that man with all his coats. We even fancy that our interest will not cease with our journey's end. We shall be on the watch to see whether that poor, wayworn woman has any friend to welcome her. Perhaps we shall offer to carry out the elderly lady's pot of geranium. Certainly, we shall look to see for whom it is the young lady is looking out so eagerly. She has laid aside her book, and is already examining the landscape, as if it were familiar ground."

"I hope you did watch her. I would like to know what became of her."

"That is my point that I am coming at. I say we fancy we have made dear friends of all these various personages; but as soon as our journey ends, and our prison doors are opened again, all the old associations come back again, — friends to be seen, business to be carried on, — we rush out from our world of fancy, overturn the elderly lady's geranium, tread on the young lady's feet, run off with one of the old gentleman's coats, and all the fancied sorrows and hopes of our friends of six hours have quite vanished."

"Mr. Murray, why don't you write for some of the magazines?"

"O," said Maria, "he would be altogether too prosy; he would never get in any story, — any romance; he might do, perhaps, for the heavy articles."

"It does very well," said Mr. Murray, "for you to talk of romance, — you, who to-day turned a cold ear to that pretty, tragic story of Italian romance."

"Ah, now, Mr. Murray," said Maria, "you are going to try your hand at a real story?"

"Not I. I could not hope to succeed in repeating it. You would all have to imagine what Maria saw, — this lovely Italian lady, with her child, which realized the idea of childish beauty that some fine pictures give us. Then, over this lady hung a veil of sadness. She had been obliged to fly from her native country, with her husband and children. But Il Signor died, and was buried in the mid ocean."

"What do you mean?" said Eliza; "does he mean, Maria, that you have met such a lady?"

"He does not mean to surprise me, — he means to make me ashamed," said Maria.

"I was only filled with wonder that Maria, so filled with romance, should not have been more moved by a story that contained such deep points of tragic interest."

"But if I thought it to be a story; if I fancied what this woman told me not to be true?"

"You would have given, Maria, twenty-five cents, at least, for a cheap edition of a story half as well told. But, indeed, I began in this way only to interest you in this woman, whom I met this afternoon, coming from your door. I went with her to her home; and that is what I want to scold you for, — that when she called upon you, you were not, at least, polite enough to return her call."

At Eliza's request, Mr. Murray told more of his visit to the poor Italian woman, who had been supporting herself, ever since she came into the country, with the assistance of her young son, who had lately met with an accident, and was confined at home with a broken arm.

Maria's feelings were soon enlisted, and she began to form, with her friends, some systematic plan of relief for these poor sufferers. Meanwhile Mr. Murray talked aside

with Eliza. He had some peculiar ideas of charity, that we may mention presently.

Hubert Spenser had joined but little in the conversation of the evening. He was examining a book of engravings; and sat turning them over, beneath a strong light, that brought out fully the beauty and regularity of his features. He had a great deal to say of the beautiful effects, in the pictures he was looking over, of light and shade, etc. He had rather a fancy for being taken for something of an artist, and had often tried to sketch his own head from memory. He was fond, too, of tracing likenesses in heads, in pictures, to friends around him. He had found at least six Elizas, and four Marias, in the book before him, that evening.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mr. Murray discoursed, one evening, at the tea-table, upon his theories of giving to the poor charitable institutions, etc. He had not allowed Maria and Eliza to rest, until they had discovered the history and the true circumstances of the poor Italian woman who had come to Maria, to ask of her some pieces of linen, that she might dress the broken arm of her boy. They found the woman in great trouble, and did all they could to help her. Mrs. Spenser sent her many things, that made the poor boy far more comfortable. Maria's sewing society found some useful articles of clothing for the destitute woman. And Maria herself was interested in the appearance of the woman's home, — its great neatness, in the midst of its poverty, — and with the sweet tones that fell from the Italian's tongue. She tried

talking Italian with her new protegé, and began to feel as if she might allow her the name she wished to deny her, a little while ago, — of a lady. She even formed a vision, that when Arturo should be well enough to go out, and return to his occupation, she should propose to the mother, that, instead of devoting all her hours to sewing, she should take up the office of teaching Italian, — the Italian she could speak so fluently, and so gracefully. Maria thought she could easily find a number of her young friends who would join her in taking lessons in talking Italian; and that it would be a profitable thing for both parties.

Mr. Murray was willing that Maria should go on as far as she pleased, with such plans. He was glad to have her take an individual interest in her new friend, as he called the Italian woman. He said that societies and associations for the relief of the poor were very useful in their way, and as long as there was so much poverty, and while poverty increased so fast as it did among us, it was impossible to do without them. But he was very much afraid that they tempted people to let their charitable deeds rest here. People were in the habit of having all their charity done for them, as it were, by some labor-saving machine; thus giving merely outward benefits, — money, food or clothing, — while they lost all opportunity of giving, — and receiving, too, — words and looks of kindness. Corporations were called "bodies without souls." It was particularly injurious, then, to leave such delicate duties as those of charity to be treated by such means as these, merely. If men, with their powers of systematizing and their fondness of simplifying labor, established such things as corporations for benevolent purposes, women must come forward, to prevent these being the only ways of doing good, — to add the soul. They must

bring their own presence, their power of sympathizing, and add some spiritual gifts to these other more material ones.

"It is very dangerous," he said, "to get into the habit of 'visiting the poor,' as it is called, in a mechanical way, — of passing among one's fellow-men as though one were a *mere agent*, without any feeling, — any feeling of one's own, — to add to the bundle of worldly aids one leaves behind."

"I am afraid all our visiting is in somewhat of that style," said Eliza. "We make out a long list of visits to be made, and are quite rejoiced when we can mark off so many as done, whether we have laid our eyes on any of these, our dear friends, or not."

"That must come in, as a part of the sins of the present age. That, we must do our best to reform, if we can. You have a long list of such acquaintances, that you visit in such a way. At the same time, you have among your friends those whom you really wish to see. When they are sick, you go to comfort them; if they are particularly happy, you go to rejoice with them. Now, we ought to enlarge the number of these, — to introduce among them some of these 'objects of charity,' as we call them."

"You spoke," said Eliza, "of visiting such as a 'mere agent.' Mrs. Freelove, who was here the other day, spoke of herself as a 'mere agent;' but it was in a different way. She is a person who really does a great deal of good. She is very charitable; and spends all her time in visiting the poor. Somebody was praising her for it, and she spoke of herself very humbly. She said that she considered herself a mere agent; that she had means given her by Providence, and it was her business to see how they were bestowed."

"That may be a very true feeling, and it may be carried to an extreme. There is great danger in looking upon our-

selves in the mere character of giver, since we are actually receiving far more than we give. You go to meet a few of your friends, of an evening, under the idea of receiving pleasure, and go where you will be sure to find the most of it. It would become quite a burden to you, if you stopped to calculate, every time, how much you were expected to bestow, in return for such pleasure; whether the duet you would sing with Maria would not outweigh Miss Pearson's sonata, and if it were quite worth while to look your prettiest, when the few people you are going to meet are not among the Graces. It is a blessed thing to give; but we must also learn the art of receiving. We must be meek of heart, and poor in spirit. Even if, in giving of our abundance, what with genius, and talent, and riches, we seem to be giving far more than we are receiving, let us take care how we put on the self-complaisant garment of a benefactor, — since there is one Being to whom we owe all, from whom we must, of necessity, receive. And the best way to learn how to be grateful to the Supreme Being, is to put on humility, and learn how to take and receive from those we consider below us, in God's and the world's gifts. — Maria, don't look tired; I am at the end of my sermon. But these white-looking hot rolls remind me of an illustration."

"One might have hoped," said Maria, "they would make you forget it; but I am willing to hear."

"We are well pleased that machinery furnished us the white flour, and that steamboats and railroads brought it to our homes; but we prefer to select particular hands to make it into these rolls; and, what is more, reserve the particular luxury to our own selves of placing the yellow butter within these same rolls' smoking sides. So it does very well to leave to the machinery of institutions the labor of serving

the animal wants of those, not so highly favored in their outward life as ourselves, while we add directly from our own hearts, all the delicate, sentimental — ah, well, Eliza, do you understand me?"

"O, Mr. Murray," said Agnes, "you have had such a long talk! Do play with us! Lizzie wants you to play 'What is my thought like?'"

"Agnes!" said Maria, "do you know, if you do nothing but play, you will never have any thoughts when you grow up?"

"But, Cousin Eliza," persisted Agnes, "you *will* have a thought. And here is Mr. Hubert Spenser, — he will play, too."

"Ah, well!" said Eliza. "I have a thought; you can easily guess what it is."

Mrs Spenser thought it was like a hissing urn. Hubert thought it was like the weather. Each one guessed what Eliza's thought might be. Eliza then told what her thought was. It was *Charity.*

"Why is charity like the weather?" asked Eliza, of Hubert.

"Because when it *reigns* most, we have the best crops," he replied.

"Ah, mother, can you give as good a reason why it is like a hissing urn?"

"Because," again suggested Hubert, "it draws up your *chair-at-tea.*"

Agnes declared this was too bad; and Mrs. Spenser gave for an answer that "it warmed the heart."

"Now, Mr. Murray, you said it was like the toast-rack; what is the reason?"

"Because it feeds the starving," said Mr. Murray, breaking off a bit of crust.

"I said," said Maria, "it was like this morning cap that I must finish off for to-morrow. I suppose, Mr. Murray, you would give me for an answer, that it will cover a multitude of sins."

"I would have been more gallant, and have said that it is especially becoming to you."

"And, Lizzie, you said Cousin Eliza's thought was like Gertrude; why is it like Gertrude?"

"Because she is one of three sisters; and she is the greatest of the three."

"That is true," said Agnes; "but I shall never think of an answer. Why is charity like the man in the moon?"

"Because," said Hubert, "he came down too soon —"

"Because," said Maria, "it is very visionary —"

"No; but, Mr. Murray, do give me a good answer."

"Agnes, I am so little acquainted with the man in the moon! Sometime, when we know more about him, I will tell you."

"Won't you tell us now about the people that live in the moon?" asked Lizzie.

"Let us play some more!" said Agnes; "only don't let us have such serious words as charity, — it makes you all talk so."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Margaret Percival looks more pale and delicate than I had imagined," said Gertrude; "she has a frail air, that makes one wish to do something to support her. She is not at all what I imagined her. For a person who has thought and done so much, she looks very slight and fragile."

"To-night, she must be very tired. She has had so wearisome a journey to-day, after so long a voyage, too! It is no wonder she looks pale and delicate, after such trials as she must have been through, both in body and mind."

"How thrilling her account of that fearful storm was!"

"It must have been fearful, indeed! And especially to her, who seemed to be almost alone, with so many friends left behind. I was speaking of it with her, as we stood together in the window, in the evening. And, Gertrude, she said to me then, — after again going over the whole story, with the deepest feeling, and words of great emotion, — she said that, in that night of great doubt and agitation, what she felt at heart was absolute peace, in comparison with inward struggles she had been through. 'I felt, then, so entirely,' she said, 'we were in the hands of God, no human hand could help us, and I believed we were in the shelter of his arms. At other times, I have felt doubt and mistrust; but then, when all earthly hope and earthly support seemed taken away, it was as though we were thrown back upon our only Help and Supporter. And, suddenly, that pathway through the valley of death, that, in other quieter hours, has seemed so dark to me, seemed almost to invite us towards it, as it were the road towards home.'"

"She looks as if she had suffered a great deal," said Gertrude.

"The worst is, she looks as if she had not done suffering. I fancy she came out here with some great hope, — with an idea that in some way a great duty was to be made plain to her. And the light has not come yet. How depressing, too, it must be, to arrive in the midst of all this rain! Not a ray of sun has greeted her yet! It must look rather dismal here, among the mountains, to arrive just before nightfall, in such a drenching rain. The curtains of the wagon

had to be drawn so closely, she could not have even a glimpse of the dear, beautiful valley. Our ways, too, I suppose, are very different from those she has been used to."

"The warm welcome, and bright, cheerful room, must have cheered her somewhat. And, indeed, I thought she looked less sad, as we bade her good-night. You stopped to speak to your father; — what did he say?"

"He said Miss Percival seemed somewhat depressed, all the way on from New York. Yet, she did not appear unwilling to talk, and had spoken to him of her plans. She is very desirous to begin to do something; and has come out with a desire to employ herself as a teacher. She wants to send for her younger sisters. My father was anxious she should wait a while, till she should feel more at home here. But she begged him not to let her wait; and said she could not live unless she had something to occupy her, heart and soul. She spoke sometimes of how those we most trusted sometimes failed; and said she feared one could not trust in others, but only in one's own exertions."

"She confessed to me, in the course of the evening, her surprise at seeing a piano here. She said, laughingly, she had fancied we should be destitute of such marks of civilization."

"She played prettily; and yet, it seemed to me, rather mechanically, — as if her thoughts were somewhere else. Perhaps she had played that air last at her own home."

"I thought she looked a little surprised at some of Mr. Newstead's remarks. He comes out sometimes so bluntly!"

"I think he might have restrained himself from talking quite so plainly about England; at least, to an English woman. And when she looked so tired, too; and, I am sure, had not to-night the strength to defend herself."

"You were out of the room when Mr. Newstead broke out about the cars of Juggernaut."

"Yes; I did not hear that."

"Your father was talking about railways in England, and asked Margaret Percival some question. She answered, as I thought, quite meekly; but Mr. Newstead must have fancied it was boastfully said, for he began to talk about a 'down-trodden people,' and the 'cars of Juggernaut;' and said he had rather be on a camel, alone in the desert of Arabia, than be shut up in a first-class or second-class car, with a John Bull aristocracy. He ran on, in the same strain, a long time; and Miss Percival looked at him a little as though she thought he was crazy. At last, when your father gave him rather a glance of surprise, he softened off a little, and went on to say how the only way to travel was on foot, and so on. Your father spoke of Bayard Taylor; and it appeared Miss Percival had been interested in his book."

"I came in just as Mr. Newstead was giving a description of his going up Mount Katahdin."

"Yes; that was one of his pedestrian excursions."

"His account of it was quite inspiring. It reminded me of that enthusiastic account Agassiz gave of his ascent of the Jungfrau. It was like that, because Mr. Newstead described it so vividly, one could, in a measure, realize all the hardihood and the enthusiasm of such an expedition. I like to have Mr. Newstead get upon such subjects. He is at home there."

"Fortunately, his animation woke up poor Uncle Andrew. I had been sitting by Uncle Andrew, and I had not been very entertaining. A part of the time, I had been listening to the conversation; and a part of the time, I was watching Margaret Percival's face, as it was turned, in profile, partly away from me. I could not help thinking how different we

three girls all were; and that two of us, at least, — Margaret Percival and I, — were, Anna, at the doubting period of our lives. And I wondered how it was going to turn out for all of us."

"My course, Gertrude, is not any more certain. I always have a sort of dread, lest sometime this happy home of ours will be changed for some other. I know that my father does not feel settled in his position here. I don't like to think of it; I believe it is wrong to be looking forward, with dread, towards a change, when, perhaps, no change will come. My father has frequently been urged to leave here. Who knows but some day he will be called to oversee certain factories in Patagonia? My 'mission' will be, perhaps, to teach the ignorant natives; while you, Gertrude, and Margaret Percival, will be established here, in quiet homes."

"You would be in your *place* anywhere that I know; — wherever your mission is, I have no fear but you will reap a harvest somewhere."

"We must not talk about reaping, yet, Gertrude. Our autumn harvest-time has not come yet. Nor is all our seed sown. We consider ourselves still in the spring-time, as regards our life; and we have this sign of it. It is in this very weariness itself of which we complain; this longing for something to come, and this dissatisfaction. You remember, on the early spring days, how we rejoice in their promises, and begin the day with most spirited, hopeful plans. The air has a true, joyous spring feeling; and we are buoyed up, and fancy ourselves equal to any effort. But, as the day goes on, there comes a cold wind, and it nips all our warm hopes. Instead of our strength that would lead us to any exertion, there comes a languor. We begin to think the summer, we thought so near, is never coming;

and our heart dies within us, and our hopes give way. Meanwhile, there is a little twitter of spring birds, — the buds are slowly swelling, — little tender shoots are quietly throwing off their dark, heavy covering of damp leaves, — our cloud of mistrust and dejection hides from us how all creation has begun already to put on its new life. All these outward cold winds of discouragement we must pay no attention to. We must not hope to see the growth, nor look forward so anxiously to the reaping."

"It would be very hard for you to leave this place, Anna, and to think of you in another home. And how very hard it must have been for you to live away from your own home!"

"Yes, twice I have been away from home; at one time, for nearly a year. At first, when I went to school. Afterwards, when I taught, myself. And this last time was the saddest; because then I had all the weight of responsibility. And yet, I look back upon it as quite a happy period. I had no time for doubts and fears. Each day was sufficient for itself, and brought its own duties. I was doing what I had made up my mind was right, and I was not troubled about thinking of the consequences. Then I had a great many amusing experiences, which I shall never be sorry to look back upon. I believe Margaret Percival wants to be a governess in a family; but I think she would find such a school as I had the partial care of, more interesting, and more exciting."

"I am afraid that Mrs. Winterton will want to entice her on to the south. I should be sorry to have her go away from here."

"And now, Gertrude, as you lay your head upon the pillow, I will read to you. May the words give us both the strength we need!"

"Thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful."

Anna read on: —

"We think we have many important concerns; but we have really but one. If that is attended to, all others will be done; if that is wanting, all the rest, however successful they may seem to be, will go to ruin. Why, then, should we divide our hearts and our occupations? O, thou sole business of life, henceforth thou shalt have my undivided attention! Cheered by the presence of God, I will do at the moment, without anxiety, according to the strength which he shall give me, the work that his Providence assigns me. I will leave the rest; it is not my affair.

"'Father, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' Each one of us must be ready to say this, in the day in which we must render an account. I ought to consider the duty to which I am called, each day, as the work that God has given me to do; and to apply myself to it in a manner worthy of his glory, — that is to say, with exactness, and in peace. I must neglect nothing; I must be violent about nothing; for, it is dangerous either to perform the works of God with negligence, or to appropriate them to ourselves by self-love and false zeal. In that case, we act from our own individual feeling; and we do the work ill, for we get fretted and excited, and think only of success. The glory of God is the pretext that covers this illusion. Self-love, under the disguise of zeal, complains, and thinks itself injured, if it does not succeed. Almighty God! grant me thy grace to be faithful in action, and not anxious about success! My only concern is to do thy will, and to lose myself in thee, when engaged in duty. It is for thee to give to my weak efforts such fruits as thou seest fit; none, if such be thy pleasure."

CHAPTER XIX.

Margaret Percival had been a day at Anna's home. She had been there long enough to begin to feel the influence of the kindly cordiality that pervaded the house. The two girls were now "Anna" and "Gertrude" to her. Occasionally a fit of formality would steal back again, but it was easily laughed off.

Mr. Wilkie, at an early hour, set forth for Fairmeadow, to meet some gentlemen on business. He expected at the same time to make some inquiries about the academy in the next town, — Wilton. He had heard that it was possible there might be a teacher wanted in the Wilton Academy. Anna proposed to Margaret and Gertrude that they should walk over to Fairmeadow, and they could return with her father, in his roomy wagon.

"Mr. Newstead went with my father; but he announced to me, last night, his intention of hunting up an old classmate of his in Wilton, and said that he should walk home, and appear in the course of the day."

The walk was a delightful one, towards the village. As it wound up the hill, it gave beautiful glimpses of the river and mountains. Margaret was charmed with the glowing colors, with the brilliancy of the sky, and the fresh beauty of the scene.

"You ought to have been, like me, a prisoner for five weeks, fully to appreciate all this beauty, and all this freedom. O, how I longed to stand again upon solid ground! All this seems to me quite like a dream, that I should be walking quietly by your side, — with two persons whom I have never heard of or imagined before. The strangest

thing is, that it does not seem more strange to me! I mean, that the sky, the rich foliage, the mountain range, look so much like home to me, — much more so than I expected. And your faces look kindly and homelike towards me."

"It is only within three months that I saw Anna's face for the first time," said Gertrude, "and yet she seems now to me like quite an old friend. And so it will be with you, Margaret. It will not be long before you will have found her, as I have, one of the strongest, dearest friends in the world."

"Perhaps, Gertrude, Margaret may not be as hasty in forming one of these eternal friendships as you and I were. We had your sickness to bring us together. That made you very dependent, and drew me towards you."

"Only think, Miss Percival, — a whole year Anna and I were walking through the streets of the same town, without ever meeting, or becoming conscious of each other!"

"I led such a very quiet life there; I had but few friends to visit, and constant occupation for my days."

"But why didn't I ever meet you walking round the common? Why was I never attracted by your quiet air, and your thoughtful eyes? I am quite impatient, when I think of the loss of that whole year. It was a loss, Anna. How much you might have done for me, to settle my mind, to help me on! Why was it not so?"

"Because it was best you should help yourself, Gertrude. Since it was so, we must believe it was best."

"Does it not surprise you, Anna, — Miss Wilkie," — said Margaret, "to see how, indeed, we do almost seem dependent on circumstances? It almost frightens me to see how some circumstances, that seemed very inopportune, prove, as we look backward, to have been the cause of some great good to us. We tremble to see on what a precipice

we were placed, and how slender was our support! It is rather fearful, that one can be so much the child of circumstance."

"It would be so, if we did not believe that every event was ordered for the best, — that the position in which we have been placed was just the right one, either at one moment to call out our energies, or else to let them rest till the true time came for their action."

"That is what our faith would teach us; but as I look back, perhaps weakly, there are certain experiences of my life, which, it seems to me, it would have been better for my soul not to have gone through, and which I cannot look back upon without a shudder."

"O, Margaret! it must, indeed, be our blindness, that leads us to look upon things in that way. For, indeed, after all, it is not that these circumstances act upon us, but we who should use them as instruments for good, if we are only strong enough. And if we only keep our courage up, God will forgive our weakness."

"And yet, sometimes things wear a specious air, and in our earnestness in seeking after the good, we may seize upon something utterly wrong, — utterly false."

"We are very blind, and walk in the dark, and we often stumble; but we cannot, in our groping, or even if we fall, go where God is not. If we only seek him, we shall find him; and he besets us behind and before. In looking back, I am not so much troubled that this or that event did take place, as that, out of such means, I have not wrought something more useful and good. Everything seems to have been placed so kindly for me — "

"What! even temptation?"

"Most kindly, if it were conquered. I can almost see how my soul needed such a struggle. But when do we

have such times of triumph? If we have yielded, the remembrance is indeed most sorrowful. My sorrow is for my own weakness, in that I yielded so far, and so easily. For none of us are tempted greater than we can bear. I cannot complain that the temptation was placed in my way. It is I who have misused a great opportunity. Then, indeed, how heavy, how deep, is our regret!"

"It is what we ought to bear, as the result of our sin."

"I am not quite sure of that. This tendency to despondency is, perhaps, another temptation we are to struggle with. Certainly it restrains our energies, — makes us less hopeful, less faithful, and less able to act in the present. I believe a great deal in the words, 'Forget the steps already trod.'"

"It is hard," said Gertrude, "when one looks round upon such a vast world, — when one reads, for instance, one of our favorite Nichol's books, of how the stars are born, — it is hard to see how such little ones as we are can be in the care of a special Providence. One feels almost lost in such an immensity of worlds."

"And yet these ought to be the very reasons for encouraging us. We learn, too, how some little cause, — the smallest motion, — may produce an effect even on infinity. We must read again, with Margaret, 'The Stars and the Earth.' It does one good to read such a book often. It reminds us how God's ways are not as our ways, — how his Omnipotence can work what we, with our feeble powers, can in no way imagine. I believe that if it were not best for my soul to have been subjected to just such influences as in this body it has been, even he might have ordained it differently from the beginning. It seems a proud, too great a thing to express, almost; and yet, if the vibrations of a distant planet, so far off that here we can never hope to see

it, will influence the motions of our small world, why can we not believe that the influences which surround each one of us have been ordered afar off, — even long ago, — each one for our good? Do let us learn not to say *special* Providence, but rather *universal* Providence."

"I will rest a while on this stone, Anna," said Gertrude; "and we can look down the village street. What a beautiful avenue the broadly spreading elms form; and how beautifully the mountain, yonder, closes the view!"

"Do you see that bright maple, standing out from the rest? It is so bright and various in its colors, it would make a gorgeous bouquet of itself."

"How came you here?" said a voice behind them; and Mr. Harrod appeared, from a path among the trees. "You have found a pleasant resting-place."

Mr. Harrod seated himself on the rock, by Anna's side. "The village street does, indeed, form a beautiful avenue from here. How far the elms extend their branches; and how prettily the houses are nestled in behind them! I do not know how I shall ever have the courage to leave this place."

"I suppose," said Anna, "that each one of those houses has a history for you. It is almost so with me; yet there are some few the inside of whose walls I have never seen."

"And it was a long time," said Mr. Harrod, "before I could learn the history of each, which now I have gained. They wear a far different expression from what they wore at the time when I saw them first. With us, Miss Percival, it is seldom that the house has any individuality. Our people are of such a moving race, that they do not linger long enough in one spot to throw over it any family association. The most learned physiognomist in houses cannot attempt to judge, from the outside of a house, the ways and manners

of those that dwell within. A person of a very fine taste sometimes lives in an exceedingly ugly house, because he did not build it himself, and had no alternative offered him; and he chose it from a motive of internal comfort or convenience."

"But, Mr. Harrod," said Gertrude, "if a person of good taste should live in such a house, he might cover up its outward unsightliness with vines, or surround it with flowers, to distract the attention; or hide it in trees."

"One sometimes detects the hands of the young ladies within the house in that way; a pretty flower-border, or a clambering vine, redeems the monotony of the bare walls. But what must the poor maidens do with their flower-garden, if the master of the house has business elsewhere, so that he cannot keep the fences in repair? or, if he have a passion for keeping chickens, what will become of their flower-seeds?

"There is Miss Percival looking at that pretty brown cottage among the pines. I have no doubt she would far rather claim acquaintance with it than with the staring little white house beyond it."

"I was, indeed, very much attracted by the air of neatness about it. And though it looks so small, it is built in extremely pretty taste."

"All that taste belonged to the former owner and builder of it. Anna could tell you of many pleasant associations that still hang over it for her. That was when Mr. Lindsay and his family occupied it. Then the beautiful taste that dictated the building of it,— that left the little grassy lawn by the side of the windows, and trained that brightly glowing vine round the pillars of its portico,— that same taste was breathing inside of the house also. This I never knew from my own observation. When I came here, the

present family occupied it. But when I leave the doors now, I quicken my pace, gladly hastening towards its little neighbor, because I know I shall receive there the hearty welcome I have just found wanting."

"But, what kind of people live in the brown cottage now?" asked Gertrude.

"I am not sure but they are friends of yours; they asked me yesterday, — that is, the daughter asked me, — if Miss Ashton were not at church Sunday morning. They are friends of the Spensers."

"O, some of the Spenser set; I am answered, Mr. Harrod!"

"Miss Ashton, I am afraid I have been unjust and severe, when I only wanted to give a point to my argument. It is very likely the fault is on my side, and that, because I could not waken an interest in myself, I have taken less pains to become interested in them. The family have no fondness for Fairmeadow, and have been longing for Boston; and will, probably, leave soon."

"Let them go!" said Gertrude.

"My friends in the next house have told me they have found their neighbors in the brown cottage inclined to be kind. Miss Nelly Stevens tells me that Miss Emily has frequently carried her her choicest rosebuds."

"Then it is Miss Nelly that lives in the little ugly house?"

"And yet, Mr. Harrod," said Anna, "as one passes into it, one is always attracted by the neatness of the little front door-yard; there are no rare flowers there, but there is always something gay and pretty, that attracts, as one passes it."

"The little garden has always looked perfectly neatly. The last time I was there, Miss Nelly bemoaned that sister

Prudence could have little time to gather in the seeds, and clear away the dead branches."

"Gertrude," said Anna, "we will drive over, some day, and help Miss Nelly arrange her garden. You want to go and see her."

Anna told Mr. Harrod that they were to meet Mr. Wilkie at the parsonage house; and, as Gertrude was quite rested, the party slowly walked down the avenue of elms, till they reached Mr. Harrod's home. The house wore merely a quiet, comfortable air; but, helping to prove the truth of Mr. Harrod's words, within seemed very cheerful, and unusually inviting.

Mr. Harrod led the way into his study; Mrs. Harrod was there, with one of her children. The child had not been well, and she had taken it to the study, where a small fire could most conveniently be made. She formed a pretty picture there, as she held the child in her arms, with its halo of golden hair about its head. Her presence, with the child's, cast a pleasant influence round the room, which might have otherwise seemed too formal, with its rows of books, all in their neatest order.

Anna seated herself by Mrs. Harrod, and talked with her of the child, and then of some village matters which they had to discuss. Gertrude, after admiring a beautiful engraving of a head of the Madonna, from a picture of Carlo Dolci's, stopped before a pretty engraving containing a picture of Jerusalem. This Mr. Harrod made more life-like by pointing out to Gertrude the very spot he had himself trod, and describing to her the three beautiful days he had passed in Jerusalem, — days which, he said, stood out in his remembrance as a glorious picture, whose colors would never fade nor change. He spoke so enthusiastically of the influence these had thrown over his after life, — they

had affected so much all the action of his thoughts, they were so constantly a never-failing source and awakener to his devotional feelings, — that Gertrude was reminded of Mr. Newstead. She spoke of him to Mr. Harrod, and of his enthusiasm for this new crusade for Jerusalem. And Gertrude and Mr. Harrod were soon involved in an Eastern atmosphere, that led them quite to forget the autumn western air, that made the sky so clear and pure, and had given them, in part, that exhilaration that had its share in the interest of their theme.

Margaret, meanwhile, sat in a deep chair in the window. It had never been her habit to indulge in day-dreams. She had often sat in deep thought; but it was never "lost" in deep thought. Her mind had a definite object in view, — something that it was trying to square out, to put in rule. But since she had been in America, these last few days, she found her mind often wandering in reveries.

It has been said that in travelling we often feel as if we were in a dream; and that the reason for this is, that in dreams our thoughts have no continuity, but are constantly broken off, and detached. This is why, when we move from place to place, and new objects and subjects of thought come before our eyes, we say, "It is like a dream." And so it had been with Margaret. Each day had brought before her a new face, a new idea, and each far different from every home association. At times, everything seemed mingled and confused, as in sleep. She saw the Grove again, Henningsley, and these old familiar places were peopled with the forms of the new friends she had made. Her eyes rested upon Anna, whose face was smiling and joyous, and whose happy laugh echoed that of the child with whom she was playing. And then Margaret awoke from her dream, and felt how deeply she was drawn to this

being, of whose existence, a week ago, she had been quite ignorant. She awoke, to ask herself, with a shudder, if she were not again allowing her feelings to lead her away from those firm principles she believed were now deeply rooted in her heart. Was there danger in this new friendship? Was she yet strong enough to keep her own position, even if her heart itself should be led astray? Something seemed to stand between her and Anna, — a warning figure that now fully awakened her to herself.

She arose, and began to examine the books upon the shelves. She drove away from her mind the remembrance of that fine library whose shelves were weighed down with those books which she had often appealed to, in times of doubt and mental trouble, and seldom in vain. It was with some reluctance that she forced herself, instead, to read the titles of the volumes before her. She fancied she should not take a deep interest in the books Mr. Harrod would be likely to select. She read, — her eye passing from shelf to shelf, — such names as these: "Self-Formation," "Friends in Council," "Feltham's Resolves," "Pensées de Pascal," "Liturgy of the Greek Church," "Browne's Religio Medici," "Barclay's Apology," "Martineau's Endeavors after a Christian Life," "The History of the Church." — Of what church? And up pressed the old question, she believed she had long ago answered. And the answer came now. It spoke of a glorious structure, firm, immovable. Within were kneeling the faithful. True, devoted hearts were there, — priests and people, — and all striving after the same end, each holding the cross in his right hand, earnest, eager for the faith. This church was wide, and its walls stretched far. It could hold within it the vast army of the martyrs, the pious fathers, the meek disciples. It enshrined crowds of sainted women, and gentle children; — it was the Eng-

lish Church, and the best and holiest of her native land took shelter within its walls. Yes, within; — but without, — could she see them stand without, — Anna, Gertrude, Hester? A merry laugh caused her to turn to the group behind her. The mother's face looked radiant with joy, as she smiled upon her child; and Anna, as she held a flower towards its outstretched hand, recalled, with her serene yet joyous expression, the mild countenance in the picture of the angel Gabriel who bears the lily. — Without the church? Its doors were opened wide; — what was there kept these without the church?

Mr. Wilkie was at the door. His presence broke up the arrangement of parties, and so broke up Margaret's reverie. He called Mr. Harrod aside, for a few minutes, into the next room; and while they conversed there, the ladies all talked together, and laid their plans for meeting again soon.

Mr. Wilkie looked into the room again only for a moment. "Anna, young ladies, we must make haste. Mrs. Harrod, I have only time to say good-by; Mrs. Wilkie will be waiting for us. So good-day, Master Willie; take your last kiss, Anna."

And to Margaret, as he lifted her into his carriage, he said, "I have a good deal to tell you, Miss Percival. We must drive quickly home; but, on the way, I can tell you what I have been doing for you."

We can best help the reader to Mr. Wilkie's narrative by describing ourselves his morning at Wilton.

CHAPTER XX.

Mr. Newstead was glad to make his visit to his classmate in Wilton an excuse for this drive thither with Mr. Wilkie. It is so much easier to go through a long, difficult confidence with another, when one seat of one carriage secures you freedom from interruption, the enlivenment of motion, and fresh air. Half the obstacles in the way of friendship or confidence are removed, when one of us says to another, "Come and ride with me."

And so, they very soon came upon Mr. Newstead's plan of what, he said, Mr. Wilkie might call, if he chose, the New Crusade. Mr. Wilkie knew that his young friend had something which he wished to discuss with him. He knew Arthur Newstead well enough to know that this "something" would probably be wholly out of the common course of things, — that it would either be, or seem to be, extravagant.

Probably, however, he was not fully prepared for the breadth and depth of Newstead's statement.

"Frankly," said the young man, "and to come at once to the point, without preface, everything that I read, everything that I study, carries me back to the *East*. I teach those boys at Chichester Latin or Greek, and we fall back in our etymologies on old Eastern roots, of which we ought to know something. My religion, — every man's religion, who has any, — centres there in its history; and, as I told the girls, while you were away, I cannot read the Bible in the morning, — I cannot commune at night with the living Jesus, — without this same Judea coming home to mind, memory, and imagination. All history again shows me that I am

not peculiar here. This same cause has led thousands of other men to look thus eastward also. Thousands? It has led nations there from the West; — it has armed crusades, for centuries; — and, when fighting was over, it has arrayed unarmed pilgrims, for centuries more. And the same sacred enthusiasm which sent Cœur de Lion there, centuries ago, sent Lieutenant Lynch and poor Dale there, since you and I remember. The same enthusiasm, by the way, which brought down the Saracens from the East to it, — and, for that matter, the Queen of Sheba from the South, and Abraham, in his day, from Charran; — because it is, and God meant it to be, the centre of his world!"

"Very well?" said Mr. Wilkie, inquiringly.

"Yes; the centre of the world. I am perfectly willing to look at the whole plan commercially; — see if I am enthusiastic there."

"What plan? I hear no plan yet. And, surely, I have not said that you were enthusiastic. I have said nothing."

Newstead collected himself. "Is not Palestine the world's centre? Centre of thought, — fountain of life, — we all own it is. But God does nothing by halves; and, so it is really centre of geography, and ought to be centre of action. Where, before there were ships even, where did African, and Asiatic, and European caravans meet, cross each other, and exchange commodities, but in that very region which connects with Asia scarcely more than Africa; and, indeed, as the fable says, gave the name to this proud Europe, which flatters herself that she is the world's light, life, and everything; — poor, younger sister that she is! Let that go. As soon as there were ships, *where* were they? Where, but sailing from this very coast, manned by these very Philistines or Phœnicians, whom all your history owns to have been the first mariners whom the world knew, and

the best. Ships, too, not only on the Mediterranean Sea, — Middle-of-the-world Sea, — (well named so, since it washed the Judean shores,) — but on that other sea, which kissed her southern frontier, — where Solomon, wise in that, if in nothing else, established the haven, — for the decay of which, this day, the commerce of the world, and its enlargement, its civilization, and its Christianization, are languishing."

"How?" said Mr. Wilkie, really surprised now, and more interested.

"How! — thus:" replied Newstead. "God was pleased, in his wisdom, to make those three continents; — (each, by the way, with its own duty in his world, — Asia, land of faith; Europe, land of action; Africa, land of love;) — he was pleased, I say, to make them three, that they might fulfil their various parts; and yet, he was pleased so to unite them, that that first commerce of long caravans, desert ships, should be possible, — that the Asiatic Joseph might pass down into Egypt, — and the European sons of Japhet dwell in the tents of Shem. Therefore, these continents are united. 'The three are made one' by those isthmuses and projecting capes which stretch from each to each. Still, the same Providence has left, — passing between and through these all, — that amazing system of water communication, of the Black Sea, the Archipelago, the Red Sea, and the rest; so that, not only the land caravan, but the fleets of ocean, might have every facility for binding together, — for making one, — all the nations of the world."

"Yes; I see your drift."

"You see, of course, that, of that whole system, which man's best study has not yet developed fully, the Red Sea, running up almost to the Mediterranean, — only kept from uniting to it, that the land marches need not be broken, —

(that Benjamin and his brothers may go seek Joseph, and Moses may lead Israel up to Palestine,) — you see, I say, that the Red Sea is the key of the whole! And if one part of God's handiwork were more important than another, we should say it was the most important line of movement of the whole."

"Yes; I understand you."

"Solomon saw this, — established his navy at its north-eastern point. The Crusaders saw it, even in their short-sightedness. It is left, indeed, to Europe, — proud, self-conceited Europe, — to leave its broad, God-commissioned bosom for centuries, — to neglect its facilities, — and to creep, lazily, months at a time, through distant seas, while the arsenals and docks of Solomon are crumbling away and forgotten. Wise Europe! Learned Europe! Nineteenth century, indeed!"

"The nineteenth century carries its mail through that very sea."

"True. Let me give it its due. Once a month, the precocious nineteenth century sends one steamer down, and one up, a sea which was white with Solomon's canvas, and fairly boiled beneath the strokes of his oarsmen! And then, the advanced nineteenth century congratulates itself on its tact, and enterprise, and skill! But, I forget myself. You are tired of this. Let this very suggestion of yours be my text now, and I will not ramble any longer.

"The overland mail was a plan of Mehemet Ali's. It brings grist to his mill. Asiatic as he was, he had the wit (of course) to hood-wink Europe enough to let it go there for a dozen years. But it is not the right channel. You know it is not. The science of Europe knows it. The port of Alexandria is out of the way. The navigation of the Nile is a nuisance. Crossing the desert in omnibuses,

is as stupid as riding round the world in a hack. And then, when you have come to the Red Sea, you have come to the wrong branch of it, after all. Solomon was wise enough to have found the right branch. His navies sailed from the north-eastern head of it. He let the north-western alone. I say what you know?"

"Yes; I remember all this."

"Then you must see, that, even commercially, the great eastern route, as it is laid out by the very formation of the world, is, up the Mediterranean as far as you can go, — to Jaffa, say, or one of those sea-ports; — thence, with your railroad trains, direct to the Dead Sea, — by Jerusalem, of course; — then, down that valley of the Dead Sea. Wilkie, I speak reverently, when I say that the finger of God has drawn the course for you to follow; and you know yourself that God's own people, in their highest prosperity, followed that course with their caravans of eastern treasure; and that it was there, on their neutral soil, that Asia kissed Europe and Africa. Why, I will say nothing more of this route than that it is not a hair's breadth longer than the Mussulman's, through Egypt. And, by delivering yourself from the flesh-pots of Egypt, and going through the land of milk and honey, you gain good harbors, instead of poor ones; a country made to your hand, instead of a nation 'peeled and scattered.'

"I marked this out, in your study, yesterday, in Jenks's atlas, and in Laborde. The maps lie open on your table."

"Then, the plan," said Mr. Wilkie, "is the opening of a new line of railroad communication?"

"The plan," said Newstead, more seriously, "is to establish Palestine as the centre of the world's action, as it is now the centre of the world's thought and prayer. As a beginning

of that plan, — yes, — let the enginery of our time be established there. Let the beginning be made, if you choose, by establishing there this line of commercial movement, which the nations wait for earnestly, that they may be bound together, — to which, your Panama, and Tehuantepec, are nothing."

"How?" said monosyllabic Mr. Wilkie.

"Wilkie, you do not laugh at me, — I thank you for that. When one has sketched out such a necessity, it seems almost trivial for him alone to step into the breach.

"But I will tell you how to begin. Let me, — yes, let me, for I am young, strong, and full of faith, — let me go to Jerusalem, and establish there my home."

He paused a minute; and they both felt the throb which must come, when the idea of home is connected with that of the Holy Solyma, the holy city of peace.

"Let me arrange, — let me invest, — let me so enter into commercial and friendly relations, as to open easy access to Jerusalem, and easy stay there, to these myriads of men and women, who would so gladly seek it, but that it is now a barbarous journey thither. Let me bring there some of the facilities of modern civilization. Let me show the western world from there, that that point, at least, is easily gained, by the curious, by the faithful.

"That, for a beginning. I will invest my property, — I wish it were millions where it is thousands, — in the enterprises which this beginning may require. Surely, I shall draw around me there men of life, hope, faith, and enterprise. I care not how various, so they are only men *alive*. Let us, from that centre, work eastward, southward, as well as westward. We will explore the forgotten region, where Solomon's caravans poured up from Ezion Geber. We will conciliate the Arab tribes. We will establish friendly rela-

tions on the Gulf of Akaba. We will acquaint ourselves with the country; and gradually so survey it, that we can safely interest governments, and men of capital, in this project we have in view, of restoring the old God-appointed system of circulation for the commerce of the world, — there, in its very heart, where the falling away of his own people, and afterwards the conquests of Islam, have permitted it to stop, dead!"

"A crusade," said Mr. Wilkie, "with the machinery of the nineteenth century!"

"Thank you. Yes," he replied.

And, encouraged by Mr. Wilkie's kind sympathy, he went on, at more length than we can follow, to open detail after detail of what he called his plan. In some points it was clearly enough finished, and accurate in all its parts. Other features seemed to be occurring to him, as he talked, wild, visionary, and free from form, as night-dreams. But Mr. Wilkie could see how far his vision had possession of him. He must have given to it thought, time, and study. It was wrought in with his devotional feelings. It had been a part of his intellectual research.

So that Mr. Wilkie was not surprised when his young friend told him for what purposes he needed advice. He had resolved to go to Jerusalem, for the purpose, and with the view, he had described. He would go there to live there. There need be no attempt made to dissuade him from that purpose. And he would not attempt influence merely by writing thence, or by talking there. He would seek the wider influence, the more commanding stand, of commercial position. He would be there the hospitable entertainer of the Christians of the west who resorted there. He would facilitate their passage to and fro. Perhaps, in time, he could gain some official positiont here. Our Gov-

ernment might appoint him its consul in the Holy City. He had wit to see, he said, — and Mr. Wilkie concurred with him, — that Jerusalem, even now, is more truly under Frank rule than under that of Islam; — that the nominal authorities of the place dare not interfere with the wishes of any European power; — and he said, that this nominal sovereignty of a powerless government, held in awe by the oversight of all Christendom, was a condition as favorable for his great enterprise as any he could conceive of. "We shall gain a truer foot-hold there than ever had Godfrey of Boulogne."

He had resolved to go. He wanted to consult Mr. Wilkie only about changing the investment of his property, that, from time to time, he might draw it from America at will, and use it in such enterprises as should open themselves before him in the East. The gentlemen had, however, hardly subsided into a financial conversation, when they arrived at Wilton, and parted, for the time, for their several engagements.

CHAPTER XXI.

Mr. Wilkie found that there was a vacancy to be filled in the staff of the Wilton Academy.

At first sight, however, the prospect of securing for Miss Percival the position of "assistant principal," as, in the barbarous *patois* of the catalogue, it was called, did not seem very encouraging. Fourteen young ladies were already on the list of applicants. For the last occupant of the post had been an amiable, spirited, successful teacher, whose administration of three or four years had given great popu-

larity to the academy, so that she and her place were well known. Several of her own former pupils had offered themselves to the board of trustees as her successors, and some of her contemporaries at the Normal School.

Mr. Wilkie did not, however, shrink at the mere appearance of a difficulty; and, as, on investigation, he thought that Margaret would find her duty here a valuable and agreeable one,— while the neighborhood of Wilton would make it pleasant to his own family to have her there, — he applied himself at once to such inquiry and conversation as he thought desirable, to give some efficacy to her application as a fifteenth candidate.

The decision rested with the five trustees of the academy. Mr. Harrod was one of these,— the person, indeed, to whom Mr. Wilkie would have first turned; but it was impossible to refer to him now,— so he went in search of Mr. Standish, an intelligent wheelwright, with a large family, who was another of the board of trustees.

"To tell the truth, 'Squire Wilkie," said he, "I had as lief not be a trustee, and I hardly know why I am one; that I send seven children to the school is the reason they chose me, but if they had remembered how much trouble it is to get them there, they should have spared me the other trouble of getting the teacher. You are the seventh, eighth person, who has come to me this week in this matter.

"I can tell you who the candidates are, and what I think their chances. Miss Aight, she is the favorite of the principal; Miss Bean, she taught the school when Miss Follansbee was sick; — she makes two; — Miss Seyd, she is Miss Follansbee's cousin, and has her recommendation; Miss Dietz, she kept the town school very well last winter; Miss Eaton, she is old Jack Eaton's daughter, you know.

Well, if you wanted, I could go through the alphabet with them. But, between four or five of these, the question rests. If you choose, I can tell you who 'they say' will vote for each of these; but if 'they' know as little about other people's votes as I know about mine, 'they' are very much in the dark.

"In one word, — the board, like men of sense, as most of them are, will not make up their minds till they have seen the girls themselves; and will not quarrel much, since it is clear they have a good list to choose from. We cannot do far from right."

"I should think so. In five words, then, Miss Percival is a highly educated English woman. Examine her, and see how you like her. She is used to children."

"Bring her on, — and twenty more, if you have them." Then, as Mr. Wilkie turned away, — "English, you say?"

"Yes."

"How long here?"

"A week."

"So little while?"

"She came from New York with me. Landed Saturday."

"Reads Latin?"

"Yes."

"Greek?"

"I think so."

"Miss Follansbee left a good Greek class. But that's not much matter."

Mr. Wilkie turned away again.

"O, Wilkie! — What persuasion is she?"

"Episcopalian."

"Church of England, — eh? — that's well. Not that we, on the board, care a straw; but it happened that our

last two or three appointments were Baptists ; and, I believe, some of the zealots were a little disturbed, and they implied that poor Mr. Munster, who is on the board, had been intriguing in the matter. The fact was, that I nominated two of them myself, neither knowing nor caring what their persuasion was. But this has brought the idea of denominational balance into this election. And if she had been a Baptist, our old friend, — you know who, — would have thought it 'expedient,' 'to conciliate,' &c. &c.; — you know how."

Mr. Wilkie nodded assent.

"But as there is not an Episcopalian on the board, and, so far as I know, in the school, we can name her without any of that trouble, at least. However, none of us will make any promises. Let her come to be examined, Monday, if she pleases, and we will give her a fair chance."

This was the conversation which Mr. Wilkie had repeated to Mr. Harrod; and which, with Mr. Harrod's comments, he repeated again to Margaret.

He hardly knew the line of thought which he excited in Margaret's mind.

There was, first, something queer to her in this rapidity of movement and arrangement. She wondered there had not been more talk, — more inquiry. She was, indeed, inexpressibly relieved to see the entire waiving of anything which seemed like solicitation or canvassing, — the cool, confident way with which Mr. Wilkie was leaving her appointment on its own merits, without thought or effort to use personal influence, or patronage. He said he knew all the trustees, but he had spoken to none of them, excepting Mr. Standish.

Most of all, however, was Margaret surprized, — and she could hardly analyze her feeling here, — at finding that her

one recommendation to a board of Dissenters was, that she was not one of them. She could not persuade herself that here was an implied homage to her Church. Mr. Wilkie had spoken of it without thinking how much it interested her; but when she drew him out, she found that there was, beneath it, not a feeling of special regard for her communion, but a sense of the entire equality of all such subdivisions, such as she had scarcely dreamed of before.

"My uncle used to speak of our Church," said she to herself, "as in Providence the Church of *England*, if nothing more. What would he think, to know that here is an instance where, to a Church-woman, it is fortunate that she happens to be all alone, among people of other persuasions?"

And then she wondered whether her uncle would credit the entire equality, as between different sects, which Mr. Wilkie's statement supposed.

She asked him some further question about it. "O! as to that," said he, "do not misunderstand me. As a whole, perhaps we have our share of bigotry. Standish is a Methodist, — a sincere, zealous Methodist, — but he is a man of sense. The fools here are bigots, as they are everywhere, Miss Percival."

When the day came, Margaret brought up her courage to go to meet the examination, and was self-possessed enough to bring home an amusing account of it in the evening. Only ten of the "candidates" had appeared. She had found it quite sensible, but sometimes inconceivably odd, as when some one asked her how she would teach "*Verbation*" and "*Figuration;*"* but her trial was not, however, at all severe.

* See Goodenow's Book of Elements.

The issue is best told in Mr. Harrod's little note of triumph.

"*Wednesday Eve.*

"DEAR WILKIE:—

"Miss Margaret is chosen. As thus

"*First ballot*:—Miss Aight, Miss Bean, Miss Seyd, Miss Dietz, Miss Percival,—one each. The last, mine. Second ballot: ditto, ditto. Then we all talked, except myself; everybody praised his candidate, excepting me; I said nothing. Third ballot, as before. Still I said nothing. Fourth ballot,—for Miss Percival, *five*. And then, as everybody had done his best for his own friend, everybody seemed satisfied. They are all pleased with the éclat which follows a stranger, and curious enough to try the experiment of new systems.

"Give my regards to her, and say I hope she will like us as well as we like her. Truly yours,

"W. HARROD."

CHAPTER XXII.

IT was now decided, that, in a week's time, Margaret must leave the Wilkies, to go to Wilton, to enter upon her new duties. For herself, Margaret scarcely knew whether she were called upon to rejoice in, or regret, such a separation. She found herself fast weaving ties of affection in this new home. Its kindliness, its warmth, all the delicacy of feeling that was shown her, was quickly winning upon her heart. And Anna's unobtrusive friendship was beginning to impress her deeply. She had already learned, by experience, that there is a higher virtue than shunning temptation, and that is in conquering it. But this experience was taught her by bitter suffering and struggle, the

traces of which she yet felt weighing upon her; and she asked herself, if she needed to go through such a trial again, if it were not better, than to look this new temptation in the face, to turn away from it altogether. In the quiet of Wilton, — in the round of daily duties, — in the society, there, of her own church, — she felt as if she might recover that equanimity, that all the excitement she had lately been through had disturbed. In the mean while, her wearied body and mind could both be refreshed by the repose and excitement that a "happy home" could offer her. She could, without danger to her form of faith, watch Anna's daily movements, share in her ceaseless benevolent activity, and wonder at that constant cheerfulness, — a cheerfulness that never flagged or failed. Yet such, she felt, could spring from but one source. She knew it must be fed from the Highest Source of all.

Anna sought to make Margaret acquainted with some of the peculiarities of the spot she would presently make her home. In one of their rides, she proposed they should stop at one of the district schools, at a little distance from home. She told Margaret that this school was different from that she would have the charge of. She thought Margaret's cares would not be as great as those of the teacher here.

"We shall get to the school just before Miss Clifford dismisses it; and I think you will see that she has, under her care, some spirits difficult to keep in subjection."

They found about fifty children assembled, boys and girls, whose eager looks all turned towards the door, as Mr. Newstead, with Anna, Gertrude, and Miss Percival, entered. Miss Clifford received them kindly. She was a young, delicate girl, and she was standing to receive the books, that the children were quietly bringing to her. After a while, she gave the signal for their dismission; and the girls first

went out, and the boys followed them, each, as they passed, giving Miss Clifford a smiling, pleasant nod of good-by. Mr. Newstead had something to say to some of the boys, who, however, were in a hurry to get out, and gave a shout of delight, as they regained their freedom.

"I should think," said Anna, to Miss Clifford, "you would be glad to join, yourself, in such a shout of joy as that. You look tired."

"I am tired to-day. This is one of my days of fatigue. I have days when things don't work as well, and when the children seem tired, and I feel more discouraged than usual."

"I should think," said Gertrude, "such days would come often. I cannot understand how you can keep up your courage, or where it comes from, for such an undertaking as this. I should think every day would be a day of discouragement."

"No, it is my own fault when such days come. It is astonishing how soon the children discover that the atmosphere is not quite clear with me. The older ones are a great help at such a time, — they do what they can to relieve me; but the younger ones are disturbed. Something is the matter, and they don't know why. They don't understand the cause; but they feel, immediately, that something is out of order. If I have a head-ache, and am languid in my way of teaching, I don't explain things so clearly, and the stupid ones grow more stupid, they don't know why; or, I am irritable, and that excites the sensitive ones; and then, if there are any who have a tendency to head-ache, why, their heads begin to ache, out of sympathy."

"It is no laughing matter, I should think," said Anna.

"No; but sometimes I feel inclined to laugh, when I am in such a state. To think that poor little I should have such

an influence over such an army of children! It serves to drive away some heavy feelings, sometimes, when I find, that, if I am only inclined to be happy and cheerful, the whole school joins in, and everything goes on 'merry as a marriage bell.'"

"It is the same in other places, besides a school," said Anna.

"It is a wonderful freshener," said Mr. Newstead, "to come in among so many young spirits. I have had, many times, cobwebs of fancies and theories, that were clouding my brain, swept out by coming into a school full of boys, who have called upon all my energies, and have not let me rest, without giving up to them every faculty of body and mind."

"Now that your school-room is ready for you to leave," said Anna, "I hope you are to have some fresh air."

"Yes, I am going, with one of my girls, in search of some fringed gentians. Two of the boys are to guide us. I see they are waiting for me. They say they will lead me to one of the prettiest spots I ever saw."

And Ellen Clifford bade them good-by, the bright color returning to her pale cheeks, as she struck in among the woods, behind the school-house, with her companions.

"Miss Clifford is a wonder, indeed," said Gertrude; "she has such a young, fresh look; and such care as she must have to contend with!"

"I think," said Mr. Newstead, "she cannot have been long in the business, or her spirits would be more tamed."

"Are these the children of the poor classes?" said Margaret.

"O, Margaret!" "O, Miss Percival!" "It is fortunate you did not ask that question in their presence. I am really afraid they would have resented it; because they all think

themselves as well off as any one is. It is the only school in the neighborhood, and all the children come here. If Gertrude and I had lived here in our school-days, we should have been among them. As for Miss Clifford, I believe she has taken up this occupation from matter of choice. There is a tale that she was disappointed in some love affair, and she wanted some employment to refresh her mind with, and recover her energies. But I have seen very little of her, and I cannot vouch for the truth of it."

"It is a new cure," said Mr. Newstead, "for a wounded heart. Perhaps Miss Clifford finds some relief in the devotion of her scholars. Some of the boys looked as if they would be willing to do anything for her sake."

The sun was sinking now, and there could be no words but exclamations at the beauty of the scene; and even these died away, under the influence of repose that was shed around. The distant mountains seemed to be drawn nearer, by the scarlet and crimson tints of their foliage, and all the valley between seemed to glow with brilliant colors. Thick patches of heavy pine stood, forming a deep contrast to the bright maples and brown oaks. And in the still stream winding through the valley, all these colors repeated themselves. The maple leaned over, as if to see reflected its varying leaves, of every shade of red; and the slender birches saw clearly traced below their delicate yellow foliage. A single cardinal-flower lingered on the water's edge, as if to show there was still another scarlet left than that with which tree and shrub had arrayed themselves. Along the roadside were hedges, gorgeous with their richly glowing fruit; and leaf and berry seemed to vie with each other in the richness and brilliancy of their hue; and the setting sun had drawn around it a drapery as splendid, and every moment varying. Piles of cloud-towers rose and fell,

stained with purple and gold; and far back in the east hung cloudlets tinged with crimson coloring. But when the sun had disappeared, these slowly vanished, till, where the sun had sunk, was left a clear golden glow, that deepened into an intensity over the western hills. There was no sound but the rustling of leaves, or the murmuring of a brook, or some distant cry of a bird; and, as the party rode on, each one sunk back in thought. There was a little chill in the air, and Mr. Newstead cheered on his horse.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Some weeks passed away, and Margaret was in her new home at Wilton. She had passed two weeks in Fairmeadow, — two brightly-glowing autumnal weeks, when each day passed on with a bright, clear sky, and the earth glowing in brilliant foliage. They were weeks that seemed to Margaret weeks of enchantment. There had been an exhilaration in the air, that had given her the power, each day, to bear fatigue and excitement, that she had no idea before she had the strength for. She had felt an animation that had made every pulse glow, and this in spite of the sense of loneliness and home-sickness that she knew in truth lay at the bottom of her heart. It seemed as if every moment she must be busy in drinking in the enjoyment nature was so lavish of, ere the evil days should come, when she should say she had no pleasure in them. She, many days, walked to Wilton, with Anna, who was fond of long walks; and there she would meet the faces of those who, by and by, were to form her home circle. Mr. Newstead occasionally accompanied them. He was always

full of talk, that excited and amused Margaret, and quite as often it shocked her. He was familiar with all the beauties that nature was shedding around them. He had a particular faculty in pressing leaves so that they should preserve their brilliancy of color, and his quick eye was ready to discover the delicate fern that the dying leaves were eager to hide. In this way, Margaret discerned new beauties in a nature, that had no history of the past to tell, but that wore a beauty entirely its own; and when night came, after these days of fatigue, it brought a quiet, happy sleep, and also her renewed strength for another day of duty, in preparing her plans for the future and the comforts of her new home. It was very hard, after such days of excitement, and she had reached that new home, — after her sad parting with her now dear friends, the Wilkies; with Gertrude, of whose warm tenderness she had learnt the value, — now that she was again opening upon a new life, it was hard to have some dark, heavy days of storm, that kept even the hospitable inhabitants of Wilton within their doors, come, with an influence of sadness, to form a contrast to such days of exhilaration.

A heavy wind shook the leaves from the trees, and sighed through the pines; a dark sky hung over the earth.

"The year is dying away, like the sound of bells. The wind passes over the stubble, and finds nothing to move. Only the red berries of that slender tree seem as if they would fain remind us of something cheerful; and the measured beat of the threshing-flail calls up the thought that in the dry and fallen ear lies so much of nourishment and life."

Gertrude, too, moved about more thoughtfully, as these days came on. The former sunny, glowing days, had passed swiftly with her. She had been well enough to

have a few rides on Anna's horse, and these rides had added another exhilaration to the elasticity of the weather. She had hardly had time for anything but bodily fatigue, and then bodily repose; and when there now came a time for thought, her mind was desirous to act more strongly. She longed for some great duty towards which she might bend her new-found strength, and turned away with sorrow from what she called her former aimless existence. A short time before, she had received Lizzie's letter, and had since had a letter from Agnes.

Anna had read these letters with some interest. She had feared, from the first of them, and from what Gertrude told her of the Spensers, that the children were, indeed, in not exactly the right position. Aunt Clara had been in the habit of allowing them so much freedom, — had been so careful to adapt their studies to their particular tastes, — that Anna feared this sudden change of atmosphere might be hurtful to them. From what Gertrude told her of Lizzie, Anna felt as if she were a child who required peculiar care. She seemed to have the delicate dreamy nature that formed a part of Gertrude's character, that needed a particular nurture. She wondered if Gertrude were not the very person to assist in this nurture, for the good of both. If Gertrude could see how ill was the effect of long, dreamy reveries in such a child, would it not awaké her to greater action, at least by way of example?

Gertrude's friendship for Margaret Percival did not grow so fast as she had fancied it would. There was a slight vein of reserve that shielded each from the other. Gertrude was afraid to confess to Margaret how great were the doubts that sometimes weighed her down. Sometimes she envied the strong faith that Margaret seemed to hold in the stability of her own Church, and she wanted to ask her

what was the door, by which she, too, might enter therein. Sometimes she thought of asking Mr. Wilkie's advice; then she feared he might not sympathize with her wants, and would wonder that she could not define to him what her desires were. And Mrs. Wilkie, — she looked on her with wonder and admiration, to see how she was never at a loss for action, especially benevolent action. But, doubtful as she felt of all these, and uncertain whether or no to speak to them of her fears, she never hesitated about speaking to Anna; and, each night, was never troubled how to form her words, in telling all her doubts and uncertainties to her friendly ear.

It was at this time that Gertrude received a summons. A message came from her father, to tell her of the severe illness of her Aunt Clara, in Baltimore. Mr. Ashton begged that Mr. Wilkie would find some one to accompany Gertrude to Springfield, where he would himself meet her, and they would both, as speedily as possible, hasten on to Baltimore. Gertrude had scarcely time for thought or words. "O, Anna," she said, "I have feared there was coming some heavy change for me, — that the moment of battle was drawing near! Think of me, Anna, and pray that I may act as you would in my place!"

"I cannot pray so. I will pray that a higher strength may support and guide you; and, indeed, I feel sure that it will."

Mr. Wilkie drove Gertrude to Wilton, where she was to meet Mr. Benton, who agreed to take her under his charge till she should meet her father in Springfield. Anna went as far as Wilton with her; and they stopped, a few moments, on their way to the station, to bid good-by to Margaret Percival.

As Gertrude left behind her the house where she had

found such a happy home, her eyes filled with tears. She turned to look down the hill at the valley where the river was rolling on. The trees were now almost leafless, and between them could be traced the outline of the distant hills.

"Farewell to the happy valley!" said Gertrude; "I am afraid that I who leave it may never return."

"If we are here, Gertrude, you are sure to return; that you know. But our beautiful view does, indeed, look sad, as though it were sorry to have you go. You have appreciated all its loveliness."

"The world is all before me where to choose. I think I am entering upon a new life, Anna; yet I dare not look forward. It overwhelms me when I think of Aunt Clara,—my dear Aunt Clara. O, Anna, how much pain I have cost her, in my short life! All this comes before me suddenly, now. I dread this journey,—to be alone with myself; for now I know that there will return to haunt me, all that I might have done to add to her happiness,—all that I failed to do. I have wished to tell you before of the visitings of conscience I have had in this regard. I allowed certain prejudices to blind me to all the kindness that now I feel Aunt Clara would have shown me. The road is turning,—my last glance at the dear spire,—the hills must now shut out the village!"

"Don't let such dreary thoughts oppress you, Gertrude. You will now have a chance to show to your Aunt Clara, the depth of love you have for her. You will meet your father,—he will expect to see you so much better than when he saw you so ill in Fairmeadow. You must let him see that our care has improved you. And papa thought one of Mr. Benton's daughters was to accompany him; you must let her cheer you up."

"O, Anna! it will be dismal to have to talk to her all the way."

"Now, Gertrude, you are determined to turn all my comforts into horrors. I believe, if I were to offer to escort you myself, you would think you must bemoan the task of entertaining me. But, surely, there is Margaret, on her way home from the academy!"

Margaret greeted them with joy.

"Two whole days that I have not seen you! Two dreary days!"

"We should have been here," said Anna, "in spite of the deluge of rain, if they had let us come."

Margaret was very sad to hear of Gertrude's summons away; and the party went together to the station, in the midst of sorrowful words of parting. Mr. Benton and his daughter were there. Mary Benton was in gay spirits, full of the thought of her first visit to New York, and depending upon meeting with some great and startling adventure. Gertrude turned away from her again, to bid the last farewell.

"Don't be too mournful," said Mr. Wilkie; "we shall hear, I hope, good news from you; and, by Christmas time, shall have welcomed you back."

The sound of the approaching train was heard. The cars had arrived, and Gertrude was gone.

Anna was very desirous that Margaret should accompany her homeward, to help to console her for Gertrude's loss, as Margaret had gone through all her school duties for the day. They both decided they would walk back to the Wilkies' in the afternoon; and Mr. Wilkie agreed to send Margaret home, the next morning, in time for her daily occupations. Anna then returned with Margaret to dine.

She was pleased to see the neatness with which Mrs. Brace, Margaret's hostess, kept her table, and the motherly

interest that she showed for Miss Percival; and she felt that Margaret was indeed fortunate, in finding such a home.

At an early hour, they set forth on their walk homewards. The air had grown milder, though the sky was still clouded. Anna felt as if it might be the last walk they would have through the woods. If an early snow should come, it would oblige them to leave the pretty winding path they had enjoyed so much through the autumn; and, if they ventured to walk at all, they must take the more travelled road.

As they walked on, they talked of Gertrude.

"She is a person who interests me deeply," said Margaret. "I have wished I could do something for her. I have thought, at times, she was seeking earnestly for a path towards which I might help her. I have longed to stretch forth my hand towards her. She has sometimes expressed doubt upon certain subjects. I have hesitated approaching them. Yet, Anna, I must express my wonder, that, when Gertrude has shown so much dependence upon you, — upon you, who seem to stand firmly in the path you have chosen, — I have wondered, when, in talking, she has expressed doubts, that you have not shown clearly where your faith rests. And, Anna, I have wanted to ask you, if it were possible your silence could arise from any uncertainty yourself; then, indeed, I have wished my words might be more powerful, — I have wished that I might — "

"You have thought you might help me, too; and so, perhaps, you can. I will tell you that Gertrude and I have often talked on religious subjects, when she has spoken to me of doubts such as you speak of, — of want of faith, which often depresses her. And she knows what my feelings are, on this subject; that I feel that the solution to these questions must be wrought out, each for one's self, — that we are each called upon to work out our own salvation. And oh, Mar-

garet! do not think that I speak this unfeelingly, without a consciousness of how much we can do for each other, or how much we can help each other onward! I believe, Margaret, that we three are destined to do much, in our onward course, each for the other; nay, that we need each other, and might fail and fall for want each of the other's support. By the silent influence of our different characters, — by words, and counsel, and encouragement, and consolation, — we are meant to strengthen each other in the race that is set before us. All this, I think, we can do, even if, in the end, we stand side by side, in our hearts a different belief, on our lips a different form of worship."

"Can you think that, Anna?" said Margaret, in a low tone. "Have you no longing, that, at least, on the last day, all those whom you love most will be gathered together, in one and the same church, uttering the same confession of faith?"

"Once I had such a longing, and felt it most intensely. I said, out of my heart, —

'Ein Tempel, wo wir knieen,
Ein Ort, wohin wir siehen,
Ein Gluck, fur das wir gluhen
Ein Himmel mir und dir!'

But a part of this feeling is passing away with me. I may have outgrown it, Margaret. I hope I am growing. But, stop a moment; — look here! Within our sight, — though the closeness of the trees and the rising hill bounds our sight narrowly, — we see oaks, a hemlock, pines, there is a maple, and there brakes and delicate ferns, — how many varieties of growth from apparently one soil! We have learnt that Nature has scattered her different vegetable races in different regions of the globe, where each has found its home. Yet, not far from the equator, mountain ranges display, from their base to their summit, all the varying races

the rest of the world affords. How, out of apparently similar circumstances, a different life draws a different form of being! If we had, — *when* we have, a higher form of perception, we shall see, perhaps, how, in different regions, are planted different religions, — I mean different forms of religion. How, in such a country as this, all these forms are mingled, and develop side by side!

"And, Margaret, when I see how little we know of such things, I feel as if it were not my part to influence the belief of another, any more than we should think of telling this little maple, that, because the soil is rocky, and trees of another nature surround it, it ought to put off its own nature, since it can never flourish here. Gertrude has certain doubts and fears on subjects where I feel my faith standing firm. But how can my faith satisfy her? I see, in her, a holy aim, an earnest effort. I feel that, as long as she has these, she will arrive, somehow or other, some time or other, at the truth, — that she will reach that form of truth that is best for the growth of her soul. There is so much that we can impart to each other, that we can help each other in; while the Spirit of Truth, — by which we can discern the truth, that is, the Comforter that Christ has promised us, — we must wait till He shall Himself send it."

"But, Anna, do you really mean that, if Gertrude were to incline to become a Catholic, you would not fear?"

"I have sometimes thought this might happen. There are many things in Gertrude's character that would make such a form of religion fascinating to her. Sometimes, she has such a longing to lean upon others, I have thought such a change might take place; and I will say, too, that I have feared it, — for it is a form of religion for which I find in myself the least sympathy. I have never been into a Catholic church. I have been very little with Catholics. I went once into a Catholic school. In one room of the building, an

altar was raised. The decorations upon it were very mean; the cloth upon the altar was no longer white; there was nothing even of the beautiful about it, — certainly, nothing imposing. Before this, the priest kneeled, and my heart knelt with him. We presently passed out, and through the hall went out upon a broad piazza, from which, as the building stood high on a hill, there stretched a glorious view. It was winter; and the outline of the distant hills wore a majestic air. I felt that, if ever I were led to an outward sign of worship, I should have been impelled, rather there to kneel before the Great Presence of God in his glorious works.

"But, I did not mean to speak of my peculiar feelings, in this respect, because, as I tell you, I think them of little importance. If Gertrude were to become a Catholic, it would be to me, for a while, sorrowful, as at parting with a friend who is going away in search of health. We have always such a faith in our own power over those we love, we feel, if the chance were only given us, we have in ourselves the strength to heal them. But I know, at the same time, that Gertrude will act with a purity of intention, with a prayerful heart. And, if we part for a while, we shall meet again happier. I mean, it may, for a while, withdraw us from each other. Gertrude will feel as if she had taken a step from me; — this will be while her newness of belief will make her think she has indeed made a great step, — gone through a great change. By and by, she will see we have the same sun above us, the same influences from the nature that we love. We shall say, again, we have the same hopes, the same faith;

'*Ein* Himmel mir und dir.'

"But, Anna, is it not, at least, your duty to lead her to read those books where the falseness of such a religion is

shown, — where she can read, with her own eyes, that the foundations of such a religion are false?"

"Margaret, it would be necessary, then, she should read the theological books of every form of religion. It is a kind of reading that is very much proscribed with us women. You, for instance, have formed your opinions without ever looking into the many volumes on my father's shelves; while they may, perhaps, be the very basis of my set of opinions. If we were now to interchange these books, — now that we are beginning to grow settled in our outward form of belief, — you were to give me those you brought from the Grove, and I were to show you those my father pins his faith to, — still, these would be but a part of the influences round us; and we should be, I fear, just where we begun."

"I wish, indeed, you would read some of my favorite books!"

"When we walked through these woods, some weeks ago, how full of life they were! You, Mr. Newstead, Gertrude, and I. Did you never observe how one would stop to listen to a bird, whose song had never reached the other's ear? How some little flower among the thickets sent up a perfume, of which only one of us was aware? Do you remember the little harebell that Gertrude found in a cleft among the rocks, that we all had passed by without noticing, — Gertrude, whom we call so dreamy? And we all were holding our senses wide awake, to drink in the last delights that autumn would give us. While we were moving along with the same spirit, one heard a sound, and one was refreshed by a perfume, or the sight of one was blessed, unnoticed by the others; — these were each heavenly influences, coming silently, separately, to each one of us, — leading us, by different courses, to the same Source of all!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

Anna and Margaret walked through the village street, beneath the elms, that now hung their long, almost leafless branches, waving and sighing, towards the ground.

When they had passed through the village, they saw, in the distance, Mr. Newstead, emerging from the woods. The sight of him led them to discuss his character and his plans.

"He possesses," said Anna, "a singular combination of decision and indecision of character."

"Did you hear, the other day," said Margaret, "what Mr. Newstead said of negative characters? I wanted to speak to you about it. Characters that seem made up by circumstances. He compared them to those pictures of what he called Napoleon at his own grave-side. The figure, he said, was quite appropriate, as being a mere shade, and which was made up of a bend in a willow-tree here, or an outline of a mound there, — the whole being formed by an outward nature."

"No, I did not hear him. Mr. Newstead, who lives so much in nature, ought to be willing to acknowledge that everybody, even some of the highest characters, owe something to a bend in a willow-tree here, or a drooping elm there."

"Mr. Newstead has great power of mind. I think, in time, he ought to make something great. I think I should share with him his enthusiasm of going to the East, to Jerusalem, if I felt one could find there any traces of the purity and original strength of the early Church there. I am sometimes afraid he has too much influence over me. I don't

like his loose way of talking, sometimes; yet he interests me."

"I am not so much afraid of such an influence. A person who states his opinions so boldly, who seems to feel so sure he is in the right himself, is very apt to throw me over into the opposite scale, out of a spirit of contradiction, I believe. Yet, I like to hear him talk; for what he has to say often sets me thinking."

"He is original, at least."

"But here is Mr. Newstead himself. He is rushing down the hill to meet us. And David Lees is with him. David was to be allowed to go a nutting, this afternoon, with some of the school-children. I wonder where Mr. Newstead picked him up."

Mr. Newstead gave an account of his wanderings, and walked on with Margaret, while Anna followed with David. David was rejoiced at his success. His cheeks were bright and rosy. His appearance was very different from that he wore the day Mr. Wilkie met him in the streets of New York, or even the day he came to Fairmeadow. Then he had a downcast, sad expression, — a look, uncertain whether the words of kindness that were given him were what they claimed to be, or had not some hidden ill behind them. Now he had more boyishness about him, — he carried about less weight of care, and seemed more thoughtless in his words and actions.

This afternoon, he was unusually exhilarated. It was not the first time he had been allowed the freedom of the woods; that was now a pleasure of every day. But he seemed more willing to talk this afternoon, and gave Anna an account of his exploits.

"You know, Miss, at home, I never saw such trees, — I only dreamed of them; and as for the nuts, I used to envy the monkeys eating them."

"The monkeys!" said Anna; "where did you see them?"

"Why, you see, when we were all so anxious to come out to America, — for we had great hopes of America, seeing that we had not much to hope from there, — I wanted to do something, that we might get a little money to help us out here; and I tried grinding an organ, for a little while. Mother did not like the idea very well; but one of the boys, that I knew, who hired an organ every day, let me have it afternoons, for little or nothing, as it sometimes proved. He had a monkey, too; and I carried the monkey round with me. Then it was, Miss, that I sometimes envied the monkey; for people would look so compassionately at the poor beast. They would say, sometimes, he must have had many blows and hits. I thought they did not think so much of me, two-legged beast, that stood behind, that had had enough, God knows, of blows and rude hits. Then the monkey had dainty cakes, and pieces of bread; and I had to stand to see him eat them, wishing, sometimes, I might carry a piece to the children, at home. And, then, he cracked the nuts right merrily. Not that I quite grudged him his treat; he earned it, too, poor fellow! and he made us laugh, often, when we did not have so much to laugh at. I wished I had him here this afternoon; how he would have chattered among the branches!"

"And did you have any success with your organ?"

"Pretty good. Monkey has helped us a little to come out here. But my father did not think it was a very good business for me, wandering about the streets. I wish he could see me here, Miss, and how kind you all are!"

"You must attend to your writing, so that you can send your mother a letter you have written yourself, to tell her how you get along."

Mrs. Wilkie met the party at the door. "I began to

think you had wandered off after Gertrude, you were so long coming home. Margaret, I am glad to see you. But you look tired."

Two children came out to meet them, also. Anna had told Margaret of their arrival. They were Julia and Fanny Haviland, little cousins of Anna, whose mother had gone to the south. Mrs. Wilkie had begged they should pass the winter with her. They were bright, pleasant girls, and Anna was to have the principal care of them.

CHAPTER XXV.

MARGARET was, through the evening, in a different vein from any which the Wilkies had seen, since she had been with them. Partly her talk with Anna, partly what had followed with Mr. Newstead, had led to this.

He had joined her, laughing, and in high spirits; his face, always bright, now seemed particularly cheerful. "I have had a grand time with the boys!" he cried. "I beg your pardon," he added, with mock vexation; "to you I must talk English. I have had a very clever frolic with the boys!"

"Your English is worse than your Yankee," replied Margaret, laughing; "and do not set me down, — am I not a teacher of the high school at Wilton? — do not set me down, I say, as an entire ignoramus, wherever a new dialect is concerned. Did not a girl come to me, this morning, as I entered the school-room, to say that accidentally her little brother had thrown a *rock* through the window? and did not I understand, at once, that no miracle had been 'com-

mitted'? I assure you, Mr. Newstead, I am learning *Yankee* very fast. Now, 'du tell' where you have been, and where you had your 'real good time.'"

"Half of it has been in the droll intercourse between little David there, — your compatriot, — and the tribe of my compatriots, the boys whom you hear yonder. They 'get along' very well together, — are very kind to each other; but their pronunciations and idioms amuse each other infinitely. Our people, you know, are fixed in the notion that we speak the true English, and you of England, a dialect thereof. I never saw a man more indignant than when I repeated to him the phrase of an English woman, who had told me her 'master' (meaning her husband) was sick. My friend cried out, 'That may do in England; but it will not do here!'"

Margaret laughed. "I have heard the phrase," said she. "What did you tell him?"

"O, I reminded him, — he was engaged, at the time, to pretty Mary Bruce, — that he had written a love-letter to his *mistress*, that morning. I told him there was only a change of idiom, and he was mollified."

"It is very curious to me," said Margaret, "both to see the constant interest which people here take in England, and then to see how their national feeling, such as I see exists, varies from what I have known at home, in the presence of so many foreigners as are here. I do not feel myself nearly so much a foreigner as I think an American would, still more a Frenchman, in my old home."

"In a Frenchman's case," said he, "of course, there would be difference of language."

"I will waive that case, then," replied Margaret. "What I mean to say is, that it is singular to see how many nationalities are quietly fusing into this, which you call Yankee-

dom. I have not heard any one but you use the word, and I own I am a little shy of your dialect."

Mr. Newstead smiled again, and said, "You have some reason to be. I speak a language of my own.

"Yes," he added, "I suppose we are, here in the country, more tolerant of strangers than are the country populations of most other regions. We are, indeed, only strangers, ourselves, of two centuries' growth. In the large towns of the seaboard, there is more jealous political feeling."

"I came to think of this," said Margaret, "first, as being an English woman myself. Then, I have already met, in Wilton, English, Scotch, and Irish, who work in the factories."

"Irish, I dare say," said Mr. Newstead.

"And to-day, as I became rather less frightful to some of the girls, they were standing round my table, talking to me; and it appeared that one of them, whose olive complexion, and dark hair, had attracted my notice before, was born in Canada. She said her French name was Marie D'Herbaut; but here they call her Mary Smith."

"That is a way the Canadians have. I am glad you have met one of the more intelligent of them. They are a gentle, polite race."

"Here, again, is the same thing, — this boy, fresh from Leeds, chestnutting with your boys, almost as if he had been here half his life. And if the Swiss boy, whose name I never remember, whom Uncle Andrew calls David's predecessor, is not with them, it is an accident, made good, doubtless, by the presence of the little black boy, from Alexandria."

"And how does this variety of race affect you? Is it nothing but *curious* to you, — only *strange?*"

"I have not thought of it seriously," said she. "It was

the French girl, — rather a favorite among the others, — who made me think of it at all."

"Yes; now, to me, it is an old, favorite observation. It makes me happy to think of; it makes me proud, not for the present, but the future. Between all these races there is a native constitutional difference, undoubtedly. Now, in the old way, — in your English, reserved way, — any one race, which has seized on the ground, holds it with a bull-dog tenacity. Strangers come in at their peril, or as a favor; — as, in England, Irish reapers in harvest, Spital-field weavers in persecution; — and the master race, in that old way, looks down on the one or the other, just as our Southerners, and many of us, look down on the blacks. What follows? Why this, I grant: that the master race gets the best fruit possible from its own stock; but it never gets bud, blossom, fruit or flavor, of any other variety, as it might have done, if it only had been willing to bud them in."

"That is a good figure," said Margaret. "You think England, — or a nation in the old way, — is like a good old garden rose. You think America is a Modern Standard, which shows, at the same time, pink, white, yellow, and crimson, in bloom — "

"Yes; and shows them all summer, too; — for I can bud into my old stocks, French Perpetuals, and *Remontant* Isle of Bourbons, and other long-lasting varieties. Mind me; I own, that, in this special case, your good old garden rose, — thanks to a thousand years' growth, — is stronger and more magnificent in its present than is my budded standard; but I am proud of our future. What, indeed, is your own England, but a nation, which is now the lord of Europe, because, centuries ago, in God's Providence, she budded together, somehow or other, Celts, Angles, Saxons, Danes,

and other Normans; and has never tried to work along as a single race, — a river with one fountain, and with no supplying streams?"

"Yes," said Margaret, "it is a cable tightly twisted, instead of one single strand."

"Precisely. And why not, as the rope-makers do, twist in new material, as you walk along?"

"And, here, the colors of the strands are still quite distinct."

"Yes, for a little while; but a generation or two removes the outward aspect, the language, the complexion, and so on. But I am fond of tracing the inner quality of the strand a great while longer. I study it in our public men; as General Jackson's Irish blood, Mr. Van Buren's Dutch blood. You can see the French Huguenot sparkle out in some of our Northern men now in Congress; and an occasional Scotch tinge, again, in the warmest, most vivid Southron there."

"It is a glorious destiny, this of yours," said she, "to receive these, the waifs and strays of all races, and bind them together."

"That they all may be one," said Mr. Newstead, reverently. "'E Pluribus Unum' has a religious lesson for me, whenever I see it."

"That is your national motto."

"Yes, nominally expressing the confederation of States merely. But let it express this great God-given destiny of America, — that she find the best waifs, — the best strays, — and show absolutely, that when God made races different, he made them so, that they might the more closely twist into each other, sustain each other, strengthen each other."

They walked on, in silence. Margaret was really touched by his enthusiasm. It had not occurred to her before that

her adopted land had, as yet, any office but one purely physical, — the sending bread to the hungry, and timber to the ship-builders. But this idea of a common, untried ground, where all races might help, charmed her; — the feeling that, though she was an English woman, she had none the less a position, and a "mission," in America, than an American girl born, was grateful to her, — it brushed away something of the feeling of exile. And, after a few minutes, she took up, enthusiastically, the line of thought Mr. Newstead had opened on. She thanked him for this comfort he had given her. She contrasted the beautiful side, the poetical side, of this vision of pacification and union among races, with the best poetry, the most vivid romance possible, under the warlike view, the jealous view, between race and race. He told her the history of the different emigrations, Cavalier and Roundhead; — French, Spanish, Dutch, Swedish, and African; and, more lately, French, Irish, German, Norwegian, and Canadian. He pointed out to her traces of their various influences; and she again recurred, with enthusiasm, to the text he had quoted, "that they all may be one." He reminded her, then, that the figure of budding, which they begun with, was Paul's, and she repeated the passage on the grafting of the wild olive-trees.

"That is, indeed," said he, "the Gospel description of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, — 'that men may be one.' And, as you say, a blessing, indeed, to find that God has, at last, called into being a land, where prejudices of race must die, — are now fast dying; and that the old system of disunion is about to prove the best system of union. And I am glad," he said, "if I can unselfishly be glad, that I live in that land."

"Did you ever read D'Israeli's *Tancred?*" asked Margaret. "Your Crusade," — and she smiled, — "will hardly

recognize his favorite element of purity of blood, — of a race uncontaminate, of which he talks so much."

"No, indeed!" cried he; "God knows that it will not! That is the strangest assumption! If the Jews, who, he says, are an untainted race, had shown any power proportional to this singleness of their blood, in these eighteen centuries, something might come of it. No; the very element, — the very point of my movement which interests me, — is, that all the promises, all the signs of the times, point to that wonderful Jerusalem, to the wonderful land around it, — the geographical centre of the continents, — as being, also, the point of union of all the nations. There is the point they look to 'from the North, from the South, from the East, from the West.' The old Crusaders understood this, but tried, in their way, to bring about the New Jerusalem, by seizing the centre of the thought of Christendom by *arms!* *Fought* for the Prince of *Peace!* Now, we have come to see that fighting advances nothing; but since all Christendom is one, in its love of Christ, — as you cannot tear that love from any Christian heart, of whatever sect or language, — as, whether they own it or deny it, there is this same spirit in them all, of a love of him and his, — as the Christian church is one thus, though its leaders try to prove it many, — how glorious the enterprise, to facilitate, at Jerusalem itself, the brotherly love of all Christendom; to receive there the pilgrims of all creeds; to send thence glad tidings to the hearty of all languages; to show, there, in that central city, of which every heart through Christendom thinks, at least, every day, that the Christian Church is one, though of many members! Many members!" he added, fairly in reverie now; "yes; infinitely many. God's way is that. No two leaves on a tree the same, though there is one law

in all. No two churches the same,—no two Christians the same; but this one same life in all!"

Margaret was startled at this little discourse of Mr. Newstead's. She was startled, for two reasons. First, because, in all that had passed between them this afternoon, she had been noticing his earnest devotional feeling, and saw, in all that he said, a warm Christian feeling; and she had, before, from some of his reckless, gay, intellectual speculation, taken the impression that he was sceptical and faithless. What he now said clearly was hearty. It was no sudden outburst. And so her first startled feeling was, that she had been doing great injustice to a man, who, though eccentric, was as *religious* a man as she had seen. Then, again, she was startled at the easy way in which he had passed on, from their speaking of the unity in diversity of different races, to speak of a kindred unity in diversity of various sects. She was afraid that, in her enthusiasm for the generous future of America, she might have committed herself to an approval of his view of this generous future of the Church of Christ. And, although she could not herself see, just now, the weak point in his enthusiastic statement of that future, yet she felt quite confident that her uncle, whom she still regarded, as he had bade her, a better guide than her own conscience, would be sorry, very sorry, to have her give any assent to such a proposal as that.

To put him on his guard, — at least, to define her position, — she said, after another pause :

"I asked Anna, just now, if she had never wished that, on the last day, all those whom she most loved might be gathered together, in one and the same Church, uttering the same confession of faith. I see I need not ask you."

"No;" said he, perfectly seriously now, and weighing his words carefully as he spoke. "I have answered that ques-

tion before you told me of it. I think I need not ask you what Anna said. I know her way of thinking. I have often talked to her of such things, — nay, of that thing, — myself."

Perhaps Margaret had a feeling that his care in speaking, so evident was it, rose from a feeling of doubt in this very question. He might be more sensitive as to division in Christendom than he had seemed. She thought, then, to follow up her advantage, by saying, more positively than before, —

"There must be truth somewhere. God does not want any one of his elect to live in error. How can that be a church, or a member of a church, which has not the whole truth? And two churches which have the whole, they must be alike, — must be the same."

Mr. Newstead said nothing, as they walked on.

Margaret broke the silence: — "Is it not so, Mr. Newstead?"

"Miss Percival," said he, "you shall not compel me to an argument. *I* am convinced that your conclusion is wholly unsound. Two things, made up from just the same elements, are not necessarily alike, or the same. Water is not ice, though made of the same materials. But I will not illustrate, more than argue. This point I will not argue with *you*."

"Why?" said Margaret, a little hurt; "are women so weak, then?"

"Do not say that. You know I do not think so."

"So strong, then?"

"Since you press me," said he, "I will frankly answer you, that I will not argue this question with *you*. I am even sorry that we have come to the edge of an argument upon it.

"When you first came here, I knew your principles on the matter of discussion of theological subjects. I knew that you had been taught, I knew that you believed, that a layman or laywoman had no right to discuss such matters. I knew that you thought that such matters should be left to the ordained teachers of the Church. I knew you were anxious to leave argument on such, to them. I resolved, therefore, the first night I saw you, that I would never tempt you, that you should never tempt me, into such discussion. With your uncle, I would break a hundred lances, gladly. But while you held the ground, which I knew you had been led to, by a hard experience, and by his directions, I knew that it would be ungentlemanly, wrong, to goad you into discussion which you felt that you ought not entertain.

"I have kept my resolution. When I have met you, I have taken pains to keep the conversation off such themes. I dare say you have thought me frivolous, perhaps careless, about them."

Margaret felt her own blush; but he did not see it.

"I have talked of results, instead of principles, — of Christian operations, instead of this great Christian spirit, or rather spirit of Christ, (for that is simpler language,) behind them. In the external realities of Christianity, I knew we should agree. I would not argue about the points of variance, because I knew you thought you ought not.

"Am I excused?"

"Surely," said Margaret, "surely; and I ought to thank you for being so considerate of a stranger."

And yet, as she spoke, she was a little perplexed, perhaps pained, to think, now, for the first time, that she must be regarded, because never ordained, as so far an inferior being, that she had no right to hold any conversation on her favorite themes, excepting that of positive statement or

of rhapsody. To sacrifice the pleasure of argument, had been to her, while it was voluntary, and her own act, a piece of self-renunciation such as a Christian woman could well bear. And, as those who have read her earlier life know, she had made that self-sacrifice, and been proud of it. But this was the first time that she had felt that her severance from discussion was not to be merely her own act. Here, in the exact theory, too, which she had trained herself to, she was set aside from it, lifted up and put away, as a meddling child from that which it ought not interfere with. There was no self-sacrifice; and her pride was wounded. She tried to struggle against that feeling of pain.

But something deeper than her pride was wounded. Margaret was too humble a Christian, now, not to have healed that wound. She saw that Mr. Newstead was not to blame. He had acted kindly, honestly. She had forced out his explanation. To have done anything else than he had done, would have been to repeat Father Andrea. She did not understand, herself, why she was pained so deeply.

Perhaps her woman's feeling was hurt, that her sex was shut out from any duty but that of reception of religious truth, by the theory on which Mr. Newstead was acting.

Perhaps it was her human nature, — the feeling of every child of God into whom he has breathed his Spirit. Perhaps this protested against the declaration that it was only made to receive, without inquiry, without testing or tasting.

And so it was that another pause ensued, in this strangely broken walk. They could hear behind them the laughing voice of David Lees, as he described his monkey to Anna, — they could fancy Anna's good-natured replies, — but they walked on, both, thinking scarcely of these things. Mr. Newstead let down the two lower bars of the

fence, as they came to the Convers pasture, and Margaret stooped under the upper bars, and walked on. They crossed the pasture, side by side. He took her hand, as she jumped over Uncle Andrew's stile, into the Marjorin lane; and with his help, she sprung down, just acknowledging the act with a word, and they walked on. She was running through the line of unexpected thought we have hinted at. It was not till, on coming out of the lane into the Factory Road, they saw the house, scarce ten minutes from them, that he again broke the silence.

"If we knew each other less, I would have made an effort to talk, Miss Margaret. But silence is a privilege of friendship. I have been thinking, not of the argumentative side of this matter, but of its pleasing side, — its picturesque side, — its harmonious side. Let me talk to you of that."

Margaret was glad there was any side but argument. She wished there was no argument, but saved herself before she said so. And she simply asked him to explain what he meant.

"Well!" said he. "(Yankee again, — that *Well.*) Well! I do not argue, — I only *suppose*. *Suppose* that it were right, — God's will, — that Christians should live, not in uniformity, but in unity!"

Margaret was a little startled to see that the question was made to lie between these two words. But she knew he meant no argument in them, and she let them pass.

"*Suppose* this," he continued, "and how magnificent the enginery of the cross appears! Here are these lonely men, who sometimes settle down in the edge of a township here, reading their Bibles to their children alone, because they do not fall in well into any organization at all; there is that magnificent Pius, — magnificent, though he is afraid, just

now; there, the gentle Christians of the Sandwich Islands, repeating, in that soft, musical tongue of theirs, un-liturgied prayers, and un-metred hymns; and then such men as your Hare, in all the strength of faith, with all the elegance of learning; — it is glorious to see God using such different tools, for one purpose, and another, and another, in his Church; — this one, building; that one, carving: this one, painting; that one, gilding the glorious edifice. For different duties he has needed them; and so, in different languages, not only of the lip, but of the intellect also, has he trained them.

"Do not be afraid, Miss Percival. I will not argue, I will not state. But my whole zeal for this plan of mine, — which, when you know it all, you will not call Quixotic, — this plan of going to Judea, to see if there there cannot be a new impulse given, — if, in that centre, there cannot be expression made to all the earth of the great hope of Christian unity, — my whole zeal, as I hinted just now, is in the hope that there one may communicate with the Christians of every land. Think of meeting one of those grand St. Thomas's Christians whom the missionaries found in India, and bringing him face to face, may be, with Hare, or with Dr. Anderson! They would not speak in the same words. No! nor think in the same thoughts! nor dogmatize in the same confessions! But *there*, in the Holy City, in the shadow of the cross, no one would care for that. Under each heart, in each heart, the same well-spring of life beating, — what would they care for symbols, formulas, or languages?

"Such correspondence as one might have from there! Such soothings of feeling as he might bring about there, if only these miserable physical obstructions were moved away, so that the life-blood of the world might come and

go again, through what is, and must be, its great heart, Jerusalem! It is worth thinking of, it is worth living for, in another light than a mere commercial enterprise, — the opening of Judea practically to the world!"

He went on in the same strain. His brilliant fancy sketched out different pictures, of coöperation between different members of the Church; — now it was a nun from France, and a hermit from Egypt, and a converted Australian, each bringing his faith to view in the dress of his own peculiar traits; — now an English bishop, and an American Methodist, — a black, from a Southern plantation, — and a lady from Circassia. Of these imaginary parties, he was always one; and Margaret noticed that he never put into the group any one at all like himself. She said so to him.

"That is true," said he. "This bouquet of instances is for your special gratification. So we throw out all argument, and seek for our purpose, of this moment, only beauty. I must be in it, or I should know nothing of it. But having one marigold in, excuse me from introducing other marigolds, or even other orange-flowers."

"The man actually dislikes uniformity!" said Margaret aside to Anna, who heard this last remark.

"So do I, — a uniformity of marigolds."

Anna never thought of the words again, — but Margaret remembered them to the end of her life.

This was the conversation which affected Margaret through the evening. She would, perhaps, have overcome the wound she received, on finding that argument, or thoughtful conversation on religious subjects, was precluded to her by the rule her uncle had laid down for her, which she had lived out so bravely.

But Mr. Newstead had broken another of her pet idols.

She had always had the feeling, that around the English and the Roman church clustered all the beauty, all the poetry, all the romance, of religion. She had not meant to rest on this as important; but she was glad it was so. Dissent had nothing graceful in it. Hester had owned this, almost, to her; and Margaret, while she could laugh at an old lady who took comfort in the respectability of the Church of England, had not thought it wrong to be proud of its beautiful associations, and had nursed in her imagination the feeling that no other covenant could rival it there. She had even thought that all Dissenters admitted this,—that they felt a want, in their own arrangements, of a gratification of the love of beauty and poetry.

And, behold! this was all a piece of her own self-conceit! Other people thought of their forms of faith just as she thought of hers. Mr. Newstead felt that his position, "the agreement to disagree," as she once had heard him call it to Mr. Wilkie, was the most beautiful, the most grateful, the most poetical, of any,—at the same time that he thought it the right position.

Margaret was fairly provoked at the short-sightedness with which she had always fancied her own house the only one worth looking at in the village.

"So silly!" said she, as she went to bed,—"so small!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Episcopal church of which Mrs. Wilkie had spoken to Margaret, which it had been arranged that she could attend on Sunday, was at Beech Woods. From Wilton it was not, of a pleasant day, an uncomfortable

walk; and, in case of storm or snow, Margaret was used to ride with the family of an Englishman, an overseer in the machine-works at Wilton.

When the Wilkies had brought her over to their house, to spend her Saturday's holiday and Sunday, they always arranged that Mr. Fetridge and his wife, — he was the dyer at Mr. Wilkie's mills, a Lancashire man, — should take Margaret to Beech Woods on Sunday with them; and thus, through all the autumn, there was not the instance of a single Sunday in which she lost the ministrations of her own Church. She missed, indeed, and regretted, the public service of morning and evening prayer, so well provided at home by that Church, — to which, in her uncle's ministry at Alton, she was now attached by a sacred habit. Yet she acquiesced in this deprivation, here, — where there was no priest of the Church, in Wilton, with a regret very different from that which she would have felt at the Grove, when the Rev. Mr. Stanley perpetually omitted the service, so solemnly enjoined in the Rubrics, — on a perpetual implied plea that he was "reasonably hindered" from undertaking it.

It happened, on Sunday, that, with her friends, the Fetridges, she arrived at the church, — St James's Church, it was called, — half an hour before the service began. As she alighted from the carriage, Mr. Newstead came forward to assist and greet her.

The ringing of the bell had not begun, and he proposed to her that they should walk for a few moments, before entering the church. The morning was fine, and Margaret readily assented.

"I have walked across through the wood-road, while you were driving round," said he.

"Why did not you tell us at breakfast that you were coming to church, — if, indeed, you are coming, now?"

"I am going to church," said Mr. Newstead; "but at breakfast-time I did not know it. I started for my walk, — for what Mr. Wilkie says is my bad habit, — what perhaps is my bad habit, — of finding my sermons in stones."

"And you thought better of it?"

"I thought otherwise of it, — better, perhaps. Yes, — let me say so, — better, I think now. The spirit of humility came over me, Miss Percival, — came, perhaps, because I was in the glorious aisles of those woods, — and I asked myself whether I were, indeed, so much better than other men, that I need not unite with them in asking the common assistance we need.

"There! I have been frank with you, and that is my confession. I left the house, meaning to indulge a lonely reverie. The mood changed, — or, let me speak again as I feel, — God's spirit spoke to me; and I said, 'I will commune with other hearts, — I will drink where others drink.' I left my old haunt up there, ran down through the Walton ledge, and came across here just before you."

Margaret was touched at his tender, serious way of speaking, — touched as she had been once before, at finding the warm religious basis which was the foundation, often badly built upon, of his enthusiastic, wayward, moody life. She was pleased, too, — more pleased than she cared to say to him, — that, at such a moment, he should have come down from his lonely, out-door worship, to the arms, to the service, of her dear Mother Church. They heard the first stroke of the bells. In an instant more, there swept up the valley the tones of the Wilton bells; and while they listened, silent, they caught hardly a full sound, but the intimation of a sound, from those of Fairmeadow.

"What exquisite harmony!" said Margaret.

"Yes; exquisite indeed!" — and, after a pause, Mr.

Newstead added, "harmony, not unison, Miss Margaret; they are not of the same note, but only of kin to each other."

Margaret was very sorry he said this. He was, himself, after he had said it, because it brought up that troubled conversation of a few days before, when they had discussed uniformity.

But she did not choose to be silenced merely by a metaphor, and she said, "I will not argue, in the minute before prayer, Mr. Newstead; but surely I may say, alluding to what you allude to, that harmony is wholly different from discord, — that no Churchman ever said that the English Church was the only church, — that there are other apostolic churches with which she *harmonizes*, and is glad to do. Your figure turns against yourself. You will own that the sound of these bells might belong to such different keys, that the jangle should be odious."

"Odious to man, on earth; yes," said he; "but they say, — Willis says, somewhere, — that a hundred feet above the earth, everything comes up in the key of F, however it started from the earth; and I doubt if, leaving the figure, God does not know how to hear all our prayers, so that there shall even be no discord, if only the separate notes be clear and boldly uttered. But I was wrong to speak of such things.

> 'O here, if ever, God of love!
> Let all discussion cease.'

I prosify the words, for I am sure our clash of opinions is never 'strife or hatred.'"

"No, indeed, — how could it be?"

"Here is Mr. Ross; I have not seen him for a long time."

They stopped to speak with Mr. Ross, the minister, who

welcomed them both, warmly; — Newstead with special cordiality, as he had a fear that his warm enthusiasms too often led him from the public ordinances of worship. A few words with the good rector and his pleasant wife brought them to the church, and quite hushed away that ungenial feeling, which ought not to have been taken into the sanctuary.

It is a pity that we cannot eradicate that uneasy consciousness which is too apt to hang around us, when a friend unused to our own dear Sunday home accompanies us thither. Almost every one is tempted, at such a time, to listen as if for himself and his stranger companion; — and that is indeed a well-trained heart, which can join in hymn and prayer, without one occasional thought of the unusual presence of another; and the intrusion of the question, however often forbidden, whether he will be as pleasantly at home there as one could hope to have him. If Margaret had herself been more at home in St. James's Church, she would have better confronted this insidious uneasiness. As it was, however, Mr. Newstead's presence at her side, which she knew was unusual there, and her occasional question to herself, whether the glorious language of the Liturgy spoke for him as clearly as in times of deep distress it had spoken to her, so far disturbed her, required so constant effort of hers to drive them away, that, when the service was over, she was well aware, — perhaps not knowing why, — that it had not been to her the same solace that it often was. It happened that Mr. Ross did not himself preach. There was a stranger present, — a gentleman who had labored, evidently with zeal, in one of the agencies of the Episcopal Church, for publication. His own good heart and faith were tender and touching; but, unfortunately, as at the moment it seemed to Margaret,

there was an occasional unconscious intimation of his feeling that one tract, written by a member of the Episcopal Church, was worth hundreds from any other quarter; an intimation which, without caring then to examine its grounds, she was sorry that Mr. Newstead should hear.

When they left the church, Mr. and Mrs. Fetridge told her that they were unable to stay to the evening service; and Margaret, seeing that no convenient arrangement could be made for her own stay, agreed to sacrifice it also. They promised to overtake her in a few minutes, and with Mr. Newstead she walked towards home.

For the reasons we have named, she was afraid that he might be unpleasantly affected by the devotions of the morning. But it happened that he, probably under the especial influence which had brought him there, had none of the disturbed or critical mood about him which she had feared. He had not had her temptation; and the first words he spoke were an expression of pleasure that he had joined in the service.

A real relief this to Margaret, who felt, however, troubled the more, that she had not enjoyed it as she should.

"I was afraid," — she said, — "I thought, — it occurred to me, — that the sermon might at times shock your views."

"The sermon! why? O! I understand you. O no, my dear Miss Percival; I will not say I thought much of it at all, though I did listen to it. He was in earnest. What he did, he did it heartily; and, in his way, did it unto the Lord. I forgave him his narrownesses, because he did not know of them; and I forgot them as he uttered them. O no! I had given myself up to the service. I am always an Episcopalian, or a Catholic, in that when I go to church, it is to pray in common with other men, rather than to listen to others' thoughts."

Margaret felt rebuked, and said so.

"Rebuked?" returned he, laughing; "are we to be always at cross purposes, in our talk? Why, what can be more natural, Miss Percival, since the chief danger of a written service is the danger rising from its familiar repetition, than that, on a particular occasion, its public use should impress a stranger, unaccustomed to its public use, as on that particular occasion it does not impress you? I went to the service with every possible advantage, apart from mood of mind and proper preparation, — in what place, I dare not boast. I had not joined in your service in public these two or three years."

Margaret felt the force of what he said, though it was a view of the Liturgy which she did not often permit herself to take; and she gave, therefore, no spoken assent to his suggestion.

"I miss," she said, as they walked on, "some of our forms of response, — the clerk, or the responses of a choir, in parts of the service. O! I wish you could hear our service as I have heard it!"

"I shall *join* in it," said he, more carefully, "I hope, before long, in one of your cathedrals. On the whole, though, there is a similarity here to home, I hope?"

"Yes," said Margaret, and she paused; "I was aware, to-day, of an uncomfortable feeling, which could not have overtaken me till I knew the people, — in observing how many strangers go to make up this congregation. I see a great many English people; and these families from New York are not to the manor born. There is not the feeling which, at Staunton even, the presence of all the, — of all the old families of the place gave.

"But stop; you may not understand me. Do not think I have that silly Mrs. Bruce's feeling, that I miss the 'respect-

ability" of the neighborhood. These people are, in God's eyes, as respectable as Governor Briggs, or as my father. But, cannot you understand the want of the *indigenous* feeling which at home seemed to separate us from the Dissenters?"

"Indeed I can," said Mr. Newstead; but he did not care to press the subject further. He spoke again of the Liturgy, where he and Margaret were surely on common ground.

"If you prize it as you do," said she, "how much more would you enjoy it, how much more would you gain from it, if you were familiar with it!"

"If I were familiar with it?"

"Yes; you said you had not heard it for two years."

"O! you misunderstand me; there is no book, I believe, with which I am more familiar. It lies on my bedroom table, with my other books of devotion, a very dear friend. I said I had not heard it used in public. I meant in church. Why, we read the morning service, at prayers, at Mr. Wilkie's, yesterday! Pray do not think that I have not prized it, studied it, and been blessed by it!"

Margaret was touched by his serious earnestness. "What are your books of devotion, — your 'table books'?" said she.

"O, they vary. I did not mean to speak as if there were a fixed series there. To-day, you would find there the Lutheran Hymn-book, a Greek Service-book which I prize very highly, Furness' Family Prayers, John Sterling's Hymns, Jeremy Taylor, your Liturgy, and Thomas à Kempis. But I do not mean that I read from all of these, daily; sometimes one is not opened for several days. Then some one will say something which will send me to another, and add it to the little company."

Margaret suppressed a sigh, as she remembered her dear Thomas à Kempis, and her uncle's prohibition. There was

something very attractive in this Catholic, side by side, position of such books, if only it were right to read them all. But she remembered her uncle's warning words,— "I wish, Margaret, you would not ask the Countess for such books as these;"* and tried to solace herself by remembering that of the seven books which Mr. Newstead had named, she had a right to use two, and perhaps three. About Sterling's Hymns she was not sure; she did not know whether Sterling wrote them before he left the Church of England, or after. She could ask Mr. Ross, and she resolved to.

The Fetridges overtook them, and she parted from Mr. Newstead, to ride home with them.

When, in the afternoon, Anna and her father were starting to go to meeting, they had supposed that Margaret would not care to accompany them, and they had not proposed it. But a real longing came over her to break the one piece of formality which seemed to hang over their close love, now that she could break it without any sacrifice of principle. Even her uncle would not have disapproved of her joining in their worship, when she was, as now, providentially hindered from her own form of devotion. It seemed so repulsive, too, and so timid, to stay at home, as if she distrusted them or theirs. All these reasonings came, superadded to the impulsive longing which we speak of, and induced her to look at it, as Mr. Newstead had so reverently looked at a like longing in the morning, as a prompting of the Spirit, too tender to be rejected. She proposed, then, to accompany them, and her proposal was very gladly assented to.

At the door of the meeting-house, they met Mr. New-

*Margaret Percival, II., 151.

stead. He smiled and nodded, as in the morning, to Margaret, as he joined their party; and entered the porch with them, with a conscious look, which implied that he knew she would be pleased to see him keeping to his impulse or resolution. They passed in to the large, somewhat old-fashioned church, in the midst of a large throng of cheerful looking people, who were pouring in from the different neighboring houses, where they had been passing the hour and a half of intermission. A good many people were in the church who had spent the short intermission there, their homes being distant, passing to and fro, from pew to pew, in conversation with each other, or with Mr. Harrod, or perhaps reading from the books of the church library, or the various tracts which were distributed almost every week among the book clubs, and pamphlet clubs, which were organized in the parish. The whole aspect of the place was cheerful, rather than imposing. There was a world of windows, in all parts of the house, — windows where people could look out, and where they could not; wherever there was space, there was a window. On the west side, these windows were closed with green blinds; but on every other side, they were uncurtained and unshaded, and through their numerous small panes a flood of light poured into the whole building. By the law of contrast, Margaret's thoughts at once reverted to the Cathedral at Rouen where she first saw the Countess Novera. The light, flooding the house here, was so different an emblem from the shade, the gloom, of the cathedral; — the simplicity of these walls, so different from the exquisite elaborate ornament there! A choir of singers, without an instrument, were singing, and singing well, "Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings," as they entered the house; and the tones of music recalled to Margaret the solemn strains of that majestic organ. These

singers were singing such tunes as themselves selected, as they waited for the regular service to begin. So different, that easy home-feeling of theirs, from the rigid obedience to system with which every part of the Roman service went on!

The congregation, as we have said, bore a cheerful air as they entered, which did not, however, comport ill with the gravity which appeared on every face. As the bell began to ring, and they found their places, a smile of recognition, or a glance, between family and family, passing into the pews, — widening, in the children, sometimes, to a broad, noonday glare of recollection, — gave token of an intimacy, a feeling of common interest, which recalled to Margaret a rhapsody which she once heard from Arthur Newstead, on the value of the word *congregation*, and the thing implied in it. This silent interlinking of family with family well enough supplied the want of the sombre, especially reverent aspect of the Catholic worshippers; who, as Margaret remembered, had glided in as if they were alone. Two vases of green-house flowers, on the communion-table, were the only ornaments of the church; unless a picture of Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee, — a colored print, which had been arranged there for the use of the Sunday-school children, and had not been taken down, — might be called such. Again Margaret's mind turned back to the artificial flowers before the candles in the Cathedral. She smiled, to find herself comparing thus small things with great; it was another instance of the waywardness of fancy, but she felt that the contrast had not been amiss. She had not felt disturbed, while she carried it on, by the occasional creaking of the shoes of a sturdy boy coming in alone, or the rustling to and fro of the people, as they passed into the pews, — carefully studying that the women should all sit at one end, and the men at the other.

The service began by a chant. The choir had finished its own singing, as soon as any considerable part of the congregation had entered; and a silence, more and more marked, had reigned in the church for some minutes, when, without prelude, the voices, — a little harsh, as New England voices are, but well trained, — began, without public direction from the minister, to sing that quartet, from the Stabat Mater, with which Margaret had such different associations. They sang, however, not the Latin words, but Mr. Fox's paraphrase: —

> "Jews were wrought to cruel madness,
> Christians fled in fear and sadness, —
> Mary stood the cross beside!
> At its foot her foot she planted,
> By the dreadful scene undaunted,
> Till the gentle Sufferer died."

As they began, Margaret felt her blood running quicker with the associations which she had connected with that music, so bound up in her thought was it with Henningsley and the Countess. But, in a moment, this memory passed away, — the real religious influence of the music, the place and the hymn, came over her. There was a moment's silence, after the last stanzas of that paraphrase: —

> "And, when under fierce transgression,
> Goodness suffers like oppression,
> Christ again is crucified; —
> But if love be there, true-hearted,
> By no grief or terror parted,
> Mary stands the Cross beside."

And, in this silence of the sanctuary, Margaret was possessed with the entire spirit of worship, and her heart and mind prepared for the duties of the place. It was well for

her, indeed, that in the entire simplicity of the church, there was no external object to divert her eye.

The service went on. The rapt silence of the congregation, as Mr. Harrod read from the Bible, was an index, at least, of sympathy and attention. Margaret did not think of it at the moment; she was not in a critical mood.

In a church, she had hardly ever before joined in an extempore prayer; but, to-day, her attention did not wander, — her fervor did not cool; — and as, from moment to moment, she found Mr. Harrod expressing, in fervent, earnest words, the very thoughts which rested on her own bosom, — as the perfect consciousness of the sympathy of those silent persons all around her swept over her, — she had not even a strange feeling, at the peculiarity of the form of worship. All God's children, — it would be strange, rather, if some of his words of devotion had not spoken for her. At times, she found that her thought, and her prayer, had wandered from his. He had prayed God to be with those who were separated from the congregation by the distance of their travellings; and her mind flew back to George, to her uncle, and she was mingling her own petitions for those so dear to her, with this great chorus which rose from the still lips all around her. But she was not pained to find that her thought had thus passed away; she reverted again and again, after such, her separate prayers, to take in, and to join in, the earnest words of the minister; and her Amen was as hearty as if it had come at the bid of familiar words of intercession.

After one of the prayers, the congregation sat silent for a minute, — in the still prayer which Margaret had heard Hester describe in the service of the Friends. "How near thou art to me," were Margaret's unspoken words; "and to all these around me! Father, strengthen thy child, and

these, — with the strength we all are needing! We are not alone, — we are here living together, — we are dying together, — one strength be ours, — as we need it all from thee!"

In the midst of this silence, Mr. Harrod rose to read the hymn. It was one of Reginald Heber's. How it recalled to Margaret his Indian home, her own at Alton, and her dear uncle's mission to New Zealand!

Mr. Harrod's sermon was short, — made no pretension to novelty, nor was there in his delivery any of that brilliancy which a silly world calls eloquence of manner. But he was entirely in earnest. His sermon was written; but, as he read it, you felt that he was giving you his thought and feeling of the moment. He was in his discourse, and his discourse was in him. He was warning the congregation of the danger into which they were led by their varied pursuits, — varied more and more every year, — of falling into separate local cliques, separate circles, founded mainly on their occupations, or other accidents. A practical affair, directed to that particular people, it was; but it opened before him the whole theme of Christian society, and the Divine order of the world; — and, as he closed, he recurred to the words of the Scripture lesson.

"Jesus died, as he had lived, that we all might be One. That the system might be renewed in which God made us! That the paradise might be regained of a united world! God, when he made man, breathed into his nostrils His breath of life. In that first inspiration, all men became brothers in life, — children of the same Father. He made them all of one blood; from the one central heart-throbs of his own life there pour forth the currents which fill every different vessel, artery, and vein, — far from each other, and different from each other, but all warmed and built up by that same Living Stream! And Jesus came to recall them, themselves,

to see, feel, and live in, this their true relation each to each. Their suicidal hands shall no longer, in his world, tear limb from limb, while the very blood of their life is lost in their mad dissension. The hand shall no longer say to the foot, I have no need of thee; — nor the foot to the head, I have no need of thee. Far from each other, it may be, — different from each other, it may be, — all shall welcome the current of God's love, in whatever direction it may be flowing, as it passes them; — for to each it will be sure to give the food for his own life. And that Christian spirit in society, of which Jesus is the source, the fountain, shall be the answer given, in Providence, to our Master's dying prayer, 'that they all may be One;' not alike, — more than the Son is like the Father, — but 'that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one in us.' So 'shall the world believe that He has sent him.'"

The Lord's prayer followed the sermon, — the accepted liturgy of all communions. Then the congregation sung that Doxology which seems to have written itself; — whose authorship no man has claimed; — singing it to that glorious Old Hundred, which, it may well be, — as they tell us, — St. Paul sang in prison. All standing, even the children joined in singing,

"From all that dwell below the skies,"

and a benediction from Scripture closed the service.

Who could have been bold enough to start the theory, carelessly repeated too often, that the form of service of the Congregational churches of New England is, in its arrangements, hard and cold? The service of this afternoon did not seem so to Margaret Percival. Somehow, the spirit of criticism was not in her, in that country church. She for-

got her old theories in the matter. And all that she knew, — as silently they waited in the pew, while the congregation slowly retired, and the carriage was brought to the door, — all that she knew was, that she had joined in the worship of hundreds she did not know; had been helped by their prayers, and had united her repentances to theirs.

It was impossible, after what she had said in the morning of an *indigenous*, native-born service, but that Margaret should feel, in this old country church, where a rude inscription on the pulpit gave the dates of its dedication far back in another century, and where there gathered old men and women whom she knew as the old denizens of the soil, — it was impossible that she should not see, that whether their form of worship was right or wrong, it was the form which was of kin to all their habits, and their daily lives. A something of the dignity of nationality impressed her. And she did not feel sure but, in part, the sense of calm repose with which she had joined in the worship of the day was connected with this feeling, that she was in the midst of the native congregation, which had its life in the very Providential history of the land.

As they rode home, Margaret told Anna, distinctly, how pleasant and grateful had been the whole service to her.

"Yes?" asked Anna, as if relieved. "I believe I was thinking too much of the way in which it might affect you. I was so glad you were there! And, then, I was so much afraid you might feel a want in it!"

Margaret laughed, and said, "You felt just as I felt, this morning, when Mr. Newstead was at our church."

"How perpetually that lesson comes, — the rebuke of our little consciousnesses!"

The girls found themselves engaged more heartily than ever before in a comparison of personal religious emotions;

far, indeed, of course, from the lines where sects are divided, as such emotions almost always are. This conversation engrossed them till they arrived home.

In the evening, with Mr. Newstead and Mrs. Wilkie, the same conversation was renewed. It happened that, before it closed, some allusion to Mr. Harrod's sermon called out again the acknowledgment from Anna that she believed she had not prized the service as Margaret had done. And Margaret, turning to Mr. Newstead, said,

"Anna and I had the same mutual experience that you and I had, this morning."

Mr. Wilkie threw down the Bibliotheca Sacra, which he was reading, and said, "I have listened to you this half hour. Do you not see that the effect of novelty is one decided element of that sort of rapt interest in public devotions which you speak of? Where you were strangers, you were most moved. There is the mistake Protestants make in Roman churches. They are much more excited, on the first visit, than is the native on his five thousandth. I have heard travellers in the East describe the religious effect caused by the Muezzin, at sunset, with a fervor that I do not believe any Islamite living has.

"But, girls, pray, never, — never, — never, — mistake a first impression, in such a matter, for the whole test of a system of devotion!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

Christmas was fast approaching, and Gertrude had not yet returned. Anna had received frequent letters from her, which had told of her journey on, of the sad forebodings

that all the way had weighed her down, lest she should not find Aunt Clara alive, of her joy in seeing her once more, and then again of her sadness, when she found that her Aunt Clara was fast fading away, and that she was indeed to bid her farewell forever. There was nothing left for Gertrude but to wait by the side of the sick bed, and watch, day after day, with the changes of hope and fear, the failing form of the dear friend, who, in former years, had watched over her. Her letters to Anna were very sad. She spoke, at first, of the kindness and cordiality of all who were in the house with her, whom she had never seen before; and yet, they did everything for her comfort, and took away, as far as possible, from all the care and responsibility, in watching over the last hours of their friend, and of hers. Mr. Ashton, after staying with her a few days, had left Gertrude with the Lesters, who then devoted themselves to making her feel at home. They strove to distract her mind from the cares and anxiety of the sick room, and showed her the beauty of the country around, and endeavored to awaken her interest in the circle about them. But Gertrude passed most of her time in the sick room of her Aunt Clara, wishing she might there in some way offer up some sacrifice, for the many, many hours she had allowed to pass away, when she might have relieved the troubles and anxieties of the suffering being before her now, whose moments of pain she could not shorten or alleviate.

She wrote to Anna, sometimes, in a more cheerful strain, of the beauty of the prolonged autumn, and the lingering winter. She spoke of the roses still in bloom in the softer air, while Anna was perhaps shivering with the first snow-storm.

She spoke, in one of her letters, of her visit to the Cathedral. "It was a beautiful morning, last Sunday, and

Sophia proposed to me to go to the Catholic church. One of her cousins is a Catholic, and Sophia often accompanies her to church. The morning reminded me of one of our days in October, when I used to tell you that the air was so exciting, I felt strong for every exertion and effort. How I wished I could now cross the mountain with you, and walk through the porch of the little quiet Fairmeadow church! Instead, we entered the great cathedral. Then, suddenly came over me what we were there for. Sophia began to point out to me the pictures, the vestments of the priests, — I scarcely know what, — for I turned away, and hid my face in my hands. I had seen a multitude kneeling in the form of worship, and I was ashamed of myself, that I should venture to look around, and coldly criticize, or wonder, or admire. How I longed to know if it were a true worship going up from the bended knee and bowed form, — and then I reproached myself, that I should question the warmth of others' hearts, merely because I found a coldness in my own. I hid my face in my hands, and the service went on. I cannot tell you what it was, who spoke the words, nor what the words were; — I only know that the sound of the music stole through my half-closed senses into my heart; I only know that *then* I did worship, — that it was not merely that my knee was bended, — that I needed not to move my lips, for my heart was bowed down. There rose within me, not a prayer, — for it was without words, — but an uplifting of the heart, such as I have not before felt. Anna, tell me whence came this worship; — was it an influence that stole out from the holiness of the place, that drew my heart, in spite of itself, and made it kneel down before the altar of God? You were not by my side, to tell me, — you were not near me, to look into my heart! And I am not sure that then I was ready to question. I was not sorry when Sophia said

she was too tired to walk with me; and I set forth alone, from the church door. I felt a sense of exhilaration, as if all things were growing possible before me; and I wanted to rise to some mountain height, to look forth, and say, — I will go here, — I will work well there.

"But I came home. I went to Aunt Clara's bedside. She was weak, — failing; her only strength was in her smile, which looked towards me as if it would strengthen me. How I wished I might gather hope from it, that she were, indeed, going to live for herself, — for us all, — for me! I feel as if it were just her hand that might lead me on. How happily we might live together now! We would return to Elmwood; we would have the children at home again: she would teach me how I might best help on the girls, — how I might lighten Lizzie of her little troubles. I have, often and often, gone over these thoughts, as I have sat at Aunt Clara's bedside; and then some motion calls me to look at her, — at her wasted hand, and dimmed glance, — and I see that I must begin to school my heart for a heavy change! Anna, I am not learning patience at the sick bedside, nor resignation. I fancied one always learnt these there, if anywhere; but I only find rebellion. I say to myself 'I cannot, no, I cannot let her go!' Aunt Clara is too ill to speak, else she might teach me something; — she might tell me where she learnt her patience; how she can summon up that smile, in the midst of heavy bodily pain. Now this patience only afflicts me, — now I learn nothing. I think how long a life has taught her that smile, — a life of suffering, that I, perhaps, have added to!

"I do not think I shall go to the Catholic church again, though Cornelia, Sophia's cousin, urges it; but it would be very unlikely that such an hour of devotion would visit me again. I would rather not put it to the test. I would

rather look back upon the place as where I once was visited with the fire of devotion, — where the flame burned within me. Meanwhile, write to me, Anna; tell me if my heart is very hard, not to be touched and brought to resignation by the side of a death-bed!"

In another letter, Gertrude spoke more of Sophia Lester's cousin, Cornelia, — of some of the family circle around her.

"I am almost sorry, when I write to you of these friends around me, lest, for the sake of describing them to you, I study them too closely, and judge of them critically. I remember once talking with you of the way we treat those who are comparatively strangers to us. How much we analyze their characters! Anything that strikes us unpleasantly, we set down as a characteristic, a common defect in their composition. I remember you spoke of how differently we acted towards those whom we love. Even if we are aware of, or are occasionally disturbed by, their defects, we throw a veil over these, — our love never allows us to dwell on them. If, for a moment, we are led to think of such defects, if any one else should point them out, we are very ready to excuse them, as a thing only of the moment, not a blemish in the heart. You wished we had more charity, to extend this veil a little further than over our near friends. It is not for their perfection that we have chosen them. Perhaps, too, it is prejudice that has blinded us towards those that are more strangers to us. We say, 'Such a person has a disagreeable way of doing so and so,' when, perhaps, it is only an accident of the moment, and we have not had charity enough to overlook it.

"I try to cultivate some of this charity towards the new circle into which I am thrown. Not that I would have you think that I am cold to the friendship that is shown me.

To no one but you would I have said what I have of Cornelia, for she has shown me particular kindness; and all this that I have been writing, and have enlarged upon, as one does in letters, — or as I do, in particular, to you, — is to tell you that what I have considered a particular characteristic of Cornelia's may be merely something accidental. Perhaps my own reserve, or some coldness in my manner, may have thrown over her a coldness unnatural to her. She has, indeed, great warmth of expression, and, I think, of feeling; but I have heard her say certain things of religion, in a hard, stoical way, as if she made it to consist in sacrifice merely; — there does not seem to be a willingness in it. It does not become me to speak so of another's religious feelings; but, when I look at her, I feel as if she were not aware of the joyousness that I, even I, believe a religious person ought to wear. To have a real courageous heart, a clear eye to see the way towards the truth, — one who could claim such treasures as these, ought to wear a firm step and a bearing of joyousness. It seems to me as if Cornelia might make a Lady Abbess; there is about her a self-confidence, that, at the same time, does not invite one's sympathy. I can imagine a timid person looking up to her as one whose light would never fail, but I cannot imagine any one clinging to her.

"Cornelia has been very kind, in lending me books to read. But I do not find I can read much. I had rather think, or write to you. You must forgive me if I send you my sadder thoughts; but you will know how these are uppermost with me. My happiest event is when a letter from you comes; then, I am sure, for a while, of support, though oftentimes afterwards there comes a heart-sinking, that with such a friend I am not more and greater."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

GERTRUDE wrote also to Margaret, and Margaret had answered her letters. In one of these, Margaret enlarged upon the position in which she found herself.

"I wonder, sometimes, when I find myself in a place so well fitted for me, such kind friends risen up so suddenly around me. Mrs. Brace is, in some points, almost mother-kind towards me. I came out here with the thought that I should have many hardships to encounter; but I find there are but few to be found without me, and my troubles within remain very much of the same nature as when I was at home. *At home!* When I say these words, there comes back to me the picture of the home of many years ago; and I whisper to myself, that even were I to turn back to England, whose name will always be home to me, I shall find almost everything else wanting. What wishes I have ungratified are of a sort that I feel I may never see fulfilled. I long to have my own family about me. I wish that my brother George had his ministry here. I wish that my Uncle Sutherland were with me, to lead me in the work that I want to do. I have often expressed to Anna the wish that he were indeed here; for one thing, that you, Gertrude, might be brought to know him. Think of the delight of having one near you to whom you could go with every doubt, whose clear eye and well-informed mind might unravel every mystery! He knew so well the history of religion, I felt as if I could appeal to him for information on every point; nay, more, he often anticipated me in my wants, and his advice and counsel came before I had formed the words to ask them. The happiest period of my life

was when I felt myself associated with him in his labors, and, for a while, caught a glimpse of a true and perfect Church. I have wandered away from my subject. I was going to tell you of the Wilton people, and my Wilton home. Some time, I am going to write to you of my scholars, and how deeply they interest me. One of them was, last Sunday, confirmed, by the rites of our Church; and I can say to you, Gertrude, I think in part owing to my influence. It is very true, what I have heard Anna say, that we, at our age, can effect much with our influence over girls a few years younger than ourselves. Such an intimacy may prove very valuable to them. We can act towards them as elder sisters in the religious family, who have partly gone through the experience that is beginning to enter into their life.

"You ask me what are some of the troubles around me, to which I alluded when I wrote you last. I am sorry that I spoke of them, for I believe there is now a hope that we shall get on better. The troubles were in our household here, which is composed of many differing elements. I have seen, as I have often seen before, how much unhappiness an unbridled temper occasions. It is very strange, so short a time as we are placed with each other, — so much as at heart we love each other, — we must needs make one another so uncomfortable! What a pity, as you said in your letter to Anna, that we cannot spread our mantle of love further! Instead of wondering over a trait of unkindness in another, and repeating it to a third person, why cannot we look upon it as a heavy burden that the owner has to carry, and see if we cannot help him while he bears it; or, at least, look into our own hearts, and find a fault as heavy there! I am so much shut up in my own room, or occupied in my school-room, that I have not been so much

exposed to these collisions, though Mary, Mrs. Brace's youngest daughter, often comes to me with sad complaints. She came into my room, the other day, when Anna was with me, with her eyes flashing, and much disturbed. She did not say anything for a while, and we went on talking; then she burst into tears, and told us how angry and excited she had been. She had been treated by, — I will not tell you who, — a girl of her own age, in a way she could not bear, and had answered in a way that now she appeared to be sorry for. Anna spoke to her kindly, and showed that she was much shocked at this expression of Mary's warmth of temper. 'If you could remember,' said Anna, 'that with such words — '

"'If I could remember,' interrupted Mary — 'but oh! that is my great trouble. I resolve often I will keep the peace. I am shocked at my own hastiness; but when the moment comes, the shame and the resolution melt away. O, if you could give me any talisman, — anything to remind me of what I want to do — '

"Anna told her she would write some favorite words that she often brought up in her own mind, when her indignation was excited against another, — that she would write them on a piece of paper, which Mary could pin up on the door of her room, where she could see it every time she came out. Mary was quite pleased, and Anna wrote, '*Beings so dear to God, the friends of Jesus, should indeed be treated by us with the utmost gentleness.*'

"Mary has done as was proposed; and I often see her coming from her room with a smile upon her face, that the sight of these words has brought there. She said it was a new idea, or one that she had overlooked, that we were to look upon those around us as so dear to Christ, that,

indeed, what was done to the least of these was done to Christ himself."

Anna, in her letters, strove to encourage Gertrude.

"Margaret has sent you some books, and, indeed, I think it would be good for you to read more. I do not like the idea of your letting your thoughts wander, as you say you do. I remember a time when I was troubled with very heavy doubts. I was in that state, that I even wondered if the books that contained the history of Christ were true; — if anything were true. I found myself so wandering in speculation, that at last I sought for a remedy. I read books that would not be interesting to me now, and were not, at the beginning, then; but I schooled myself to it. I read all the evidences of Christianity; the proofs that the writings were what they pretend to be; that the apostles really lived and wrote in faith; that there was no break in the handing down of these Scriptures, but that they could be traced from the very source from which they were said to have sprung. It turned out to be just the food my mind was in need of then, and I have been very grateful to it. This study laid up for me a store of facts, for which I have been very thankful since. It has served as a foundation for other sorts of religious knowledge; and now I never have to stir it up, to see how secure it is. But such a study you may not have the time nor the heart for, now, nor, indeed, the need of; but, as Margaret says, there are, for you to read, the lives of those who have suffered before us; and the knowledge of their contest, and their 'victory too,' helps us on.

"I must not let this letter go without telling you how Margaret wins upon every one in Wilton. She is a great favorite at the school, and throughout the village. She is indefatigable in visiting the poor, and those who are in

trouble. You know there are more really poor people in Wilton than with us; and Margaret has been earnest in finding them out, and sympathizing in their troubles. They look forward to her coming with the greatest pleasure, and she reads to them, and talks cheerfully to them.

"We talk, sometimes, upon the subject of 'the Church,' but on that point I do not think we draw nearer together. I love her more and more, and can respect that form of religion that has served to make her so truthful, so earnest in doing right, and so steadfast."

CHAPTER XXIX.

One morning, Margaret awoke to look out upon the first snow-storm. She drew up the window-curtain, and there lay before her that wondrous scene towards which, from each returning season, our eyes grow more familiar, but which must needs excite a few words of surprise, with its renewed beauty, from the lips of the most indifferent. What a change from the night before! Then the landscape wore a desolate air; the bared branches of the trees were sighing beneath a heavy wind, and the distant hills showed an indistinct outline against the darker sky. Now everything was transformed, and wore a glorified garment. The delicate branches of the smallest trees hung drooping with their white burden. How picturesque was the building opposite! A heavy hanging elm had never served before to hide the blackened building below, that had always been an eyesore in the landscape. But even this was now covered with beauty, the thick-piled snow hanging over the projecting eaves, and giving a graceful form to what was

absolutely ugly beneath. The snow was still silently falling, and spread a dazzling veil before the eye.

As she passed through the little front door-yard, on her way to school, Margaret was still excited with wonder. Everything here had been transfigured too. The formal outline of the picketed fence even, had been rendered graceful; and two slender trees, that had been all summer struggling for growth, now wore a beautiful snow-foliage, more lovely than the fondest gardener could have pictured. These trees had always been subjects of speculation with Margaret; they had, through the autumn, stretched their meagre, leafless branches towards each other, as if with a vain effort to protect the broad stump of an elm that lay between them. This broad stump must once have borne a finely spreading tree of the same nature as the one that grew the opposite side of the road, and it had the marks of having been cut but lately. Margaret had often wondered at the kind of taste, or had asked herself what could have been the feeling, that had led to the cutting down of so magnificent a tree, and had then planted these two pathetic-looking ash-trees, as if to mourn over the spot.

All school-time, Margaret's eyes were wandering towards the windows. The silent snow fell slower and slower, and when the school-hours were over, and Margaret reached the door, the storm had ceased, the sky was cleared of clouds, and was of a deep, dazzling blue.

Margaret walked away from the noise of the happy children, revelling in the snow, up the street towards Fairmeadow. It seemed to her that silence gave an added beauty to the scene, and she wanted to yield to the mysterious feeling that this magic change awoke in her heart. How beautiful the silence was! — the delicate flakes, how noiselessly they fell from the trees to the whitened ground!

She was walking on in a wonder of delight, when she was addressed by a passer by.

"Shan't I give you a lift, Ma'am?"

A man was driving a large sledge, now emptied of wood; and two of the school-children were already seated on the edge, rejoicing at the generous offer they had received of a ride. Margaret hesitated. She had set forth with a feeling that she might, perhaps, reach Fairmeadow and the Wilkies'. She wanted to share with Anna the new-born delight of the day, and had been earnestly plunging on through the snow. She looked down upon the untrodden way before her, and the snow more than ankle deep, and then discovered that the wood-cutter was going beyond Fairmeadow, as far as the factory village. He agreed to leave her at Mr. Wilkie's house, as he passed; and she took her seat by his side, and found herself going on more rapidly. Now she joined in with the delight of the children, at the heavily laden trees, and the long icicles, and the boys skating in the pools beside the road.

"What a palace your house has become!" said Margaret, as they stopped to leave the girls at their home. "What a beautiful diamond-sparkling hanging the icicles make, above the windows!"

"Yes; it is like Aladdin's palace; and the boys are going to put up a white snow statue, this afternoon, to protect it. But, Miss Percival, what is that party shouting to you?"

A sleigh, with jingling bells, drove up by the side, containing Mr. Newstead, Anna, and the Haviland children, with a seat for Margaret, whom they were to persuade to ride with them, and then return home together. Anna laughed heartily, at finding Margaret so comfortably seated on the wood-sled, and doubted whether she would be willing to change her position.

"We must go to Mrs. Brace's, before we go further, and get you a few more cloaks. The rule, in sleigh-riding, is, to wear everything you have got, and then to borrow. The person was never yet seen, who was too warm, or too comfortable, on a sleigh-ride. Then we are to take the road through the valley, over the hills, and home by the post-office, where I prophesy there will be a letter from Gertrude awaiting us."

Margaret now shouted, too, with delight and excitement, as the children did at the joyous beauty of all they passed through, — at each icicled tree, that sent back the sparkling sunbeam, — at the snow mantled fir-trees, — at the strange old oaks, that stretched out their arms, like giants in a ghostlike drapery; nay, at every little flake of snow, that fell, like a white star, on the fur of her muff.

"I thought you would be busy to-day, and I must go to you, if I wanted to see you," said Margaret to Anna.

"O, we forgot all business, when we looked out of the window to-day. I determined, if the snow would only stop falling in time, you should have with me the first view of the forest trees, before they had shaken it off. I roused Mr. Newstead, and everybody in the house, into activity on the subject. The children were ready enough, with their enthusiasm, to help me. Mr. Newstead's only doubt was whether our sleigh-bells were the most musical that could be picked up. And you came near thwarting it all, by eloping with Mr. Woodfell. We should have missed you, surely, if you had got on faster, beyond where the road turns off, for we came through the woods; and you and your Mr. Woodfell would have had your morning together."

"See that giant ghost!" cried the children, as a large sign-board stretched itself forth, all laden with snow.

"Now," said Mr. Newstead, "we shall never know

where we are going. This downward road, I think, leads into fairy land; and unless our horses go like the wind, we shall never come out again, but ride forever round in a circle."

"Stop a moment," said Anna; "listen a while to these boughs. What a strange sound sighs out of the large limbs of the trees, as they wave over each other! It is like no other sound in music."

"That is a part of the elfin music; no mortal ever understands its meaning. I am afraid it is a bad sign for us that we have even heard it!"

"O, Mr. Newstead," cried one of the children, "you cannot frighten us in broad day-light!"

"And, then, our horses *are* going as fast as the wind; and here we come out of the grove, after all."

"Only strong-hearted persons ever come out of that grove alive, and it is very dangerous to stop and listen to the music. But here is a little stream; let us drive down, and cross on the ice. Now we can see the skaters. What a happy world it is, and what a happy day!"

"Such a bright-looking sky," said Margaret, "such a pure-looking earth, ought to drive away all superstition. It is no wonder fairies and goblins do not live here. There is not gloom nor shadow enough for them."

"Do Naiads walk on their heads?" asked Fanny.

"On their heads! Why so?"

"Why, the trees are always up side down in the water, and the forests; and when they walk through the groves, I always thought the fairies under water would have to walk on their heads."

"Mr. Newstead," said Margaret, after they had been in silence for a while, "it was five weeks ago, that you told me that another month would find you on the sea, on your

way to Palestine! What has become of that dilatory Mr. Astley?"

"Mr. Newstead's crusade," said Anna, "is as difficult to put in action as those of the olden time. Mr. Newstead is a Godfrey of Bouillon, and the rest of the world are degenerate."

"Astley is degenerate, indeed," said Mr. Newstead, "since he is direct in descent from the earlier settlers of Virginia. If it had not been for him, I should have been ploughing the seas now, my eyes directed towards Jerusalem. Astley declared he would go with me, if I would wait for him; and as, in our college days, we formed many visions together, I was not sorry to delay a while, for the sake of realizing some of these visions. Now, he writes me, he cannot go till early spring; and, meanwhile, I am launched upon a new enterprise."

"You mean your plan for the orphan boys."

"Yes. When I first began to talk about it, I thought I should only undertake the talking, and leave behind me, when I should go to Palestine, the execution of my plans. But now that I am more interested in the affair, I feel that no one, perhaps, can stand at the head of the concern better than I myself, and that no one else has the time for it. I have entered into correspondence with a Mr. Murray, of Boston, on the subject, who has given me some very good suggestions, and encourages me to think that the project is one that will succeed, and be of great benefit. I find I am not likely to want for funds."

"Is it possible," asked Margaret, "that this can so easily take the place of your Eastern longing?"

"Take the place! Miss Percival, you could not believe it possible! It only reconciles me to waiting until spring, when Astley can go out with me. Astley is a person of

a strictly practical mind. He is interested in the coasting trade, between Askelon and Scanderoon. I feel it quite important to enlist him in my enterprise. In this way, my delay through the winter will not only help on my cause, but give me an opportunity to be useful at home. I am thankful, meanwhile, that I have this employment to interest me. Anna Wilkie looks incredulous. I believe you think that next spring will bring me something new to detain me."

"I believe you think me very unenthusiastic, very unsympathizing. I will confess, that, for the sake of the orphan boys, I am very glad you are willing to delay one winter; and that I see a positive good to be done here, while the other was but visionary. But I none the less love visions."

"But the horses are, indeed, going quite too fast," said Julia; "here we are, turning into the village street. O, Anna, we shall be at home too soon!"

"But we shall have another ride. To-night, by moonlight, we will carry Margaret home."

There was, indeed, a letter from Gertrude, which greeted Anna and Margaret with delight. They delayed opening it until they should reach home.

"I hope," said Anna, "we shall find that Gertrude has, at least, had some little of the happiness and joyousness that we have had this morning."

CHAPTER XXX.

GERTRUDE'S letter did, indeed, begin in a more happy tone than any of her later letters. Aunt Clara had, for a few days, been a little better, and the Lesters had insisted that Gertrude should go on to Washington, and pass a day there; and she gave an amusing account of everything new that she saw. But the tone of her letter changed: —

"I cannot write, my dear Anna, any further in this strain. I cannot, indeed, disguise to you how wretched I am. I have tried to send you a happy account of myself; but my soul sinks lower and lower! O, Anna! can you not come to me, — can you not lift me out of myself? In my heart there is no peace! I dare not to look back, — there is no joy in the present, — and hope, I cannot! I am so weak, I dare not venture to think, that, in my strongest moments, I can ever be what I would wish to be. I feel no inward power; I need an outward hand to help me. I feel, if I could only quietly drop out, some way, it would be the better for me, — for everybody. Yesterday, we drove to the beautiful cemetery. I envied the rose-leaves, as they fell towards the earth. I envied the quiet ones that lay below. I saw the cross that stood above the graves, and I felt that I had not strength to lift it. I wished that my sentence were written, and that my soul lay in the same rest as my body, in its eternal home. I hear you say, 'This is wicked;' — and how I wish that I could really hear you say so! The tones of your voice might have something to refresh me, like a cool sea-breeze. Now, all tones sound reproachfully to me, and the air, and perfumes, and music, and all things,

say to me, Thou wert weighed in the balance, and found wanting! And to all this I listen, dull and heavily. Last night, the Germania Band played a serenade before the house above us. I was sitting, late at night, alone, in Aunt Clara's room. There came up to me the most delicious of all harmonies, in the stillest of nights. And even this reproached me; I felt as if I alone were at discord, — as if all things else united in the most blissful of harmonies, which I might never reach. And my discord was the discord of silence; for I could not find a note of praise. How beautiful are the silences in real music! They are as expressive as the strains that close before, and follow them. But my silence is such that no tone breaks up. O, Anna! will you not indeed come, and put your arms around your friend, and say, that, in spite of all my weakness, you still will love me? I feel as if all else would leave me, and God himself forsake me! Yes, I see nothing in me from which I can claim the love of any being; and this fills me with doubt, most heavy doubt. At times, I even doubt your love for me, and I think I ought not ask it. I have striven, in my letters, not to impart to you the depth of my troubles; but I can hide it no longer; and I earnestly pray to you, to come to me, to support me!

"I wish that I could explain to you what my troubles are. I have, for a long time, felt an absence of all faith. I think you have, in part, seen this, when I have been with you; but I could not show you all, nor can I now. By your side, I felt as if the spirit of faith that guided you had utterly deserted me. I wished to put myself upon your path, that I might at least look forward to reaching, some time, where you have reached. You know not what it is to doubt what I have doubted, even the goodness of God. And when, at times, his majesty and greatness come before me, then rises

the thought of my own littleness, and I doubt myself. I am too low, too mean, — yes, Anna, too wicked, — ever to be called a child of God! Is there a life beyond this? If so, what can I do there? I, who have lived weakly, shall always be weak here, how low, how mean, — the thought of what I shall be there is too dreadful for me! I find, in all my doubts, I must needs believe in a future life, — else I would almost rejoice. Do not shudder, Anna, at the thought of extinction! Anna, I have lived too long without a thought of God, to know now where he is, or how to find him. I can acknowledge the beauty of a religious life. I fancied, if I sought after it, I could find it. But now I feel I have not the strength for it. I fear there is no repose in it, and that I must sink back into my former sleep, or die. If I could but close my eyes, and wake no more! Tell me if there is any hope for such as I, — if there is such a thing as faith, as trust, — and if these bring repose! There are many that love you, — you have much love to spare. But when I think of my weakness, even my despair, I feel it is no more than my desert, to be forsaken of all, — even by God!"

When Anna had read this letter, she went to her father, and read to him a part of it. She begged him that he would let her go, even if she went alone, to Gertrude.

"Gertrude seems in sad need of a friend. She left here perhaps before she was strong enough to bear such a journey; and this great sorrow has added to her weakness, to break her down. If it were a fever that she were ill of now, you would let me go on to her; and is not this far harder for her to bear alone than the heaviest bodily suffering?"

"Is not this a struggle, Anna, that she needs to go through alone? Gertrude must acquire strength out of herself, somehow. Then, is not this merely a mood of sadness, that by

this time has passed away with her? It is a great mistake that people make in writing letters in these moods. They are not aware what effect they may produce upon those who receive them. It is a pleasure to pour out these ill feelings, and the writer has dispersed them, perhaps, in the act of writing them. Indeed, Anna, you must consider what a journey to Baltimore is, at this season of the year, and that it ought not to be taken on a mere impulse."

Anna could not reply. She felt as if she had answer enough to make. If Gertrude had been her own sister, whether she had been ill in heart or in body, her father would have surely allowed her to go on, and give what strength she might. And was not Gertrude as much as any sister to her? But she made no answer; perhaps she felt no desire to move her father merely by her entreaties.

Margaret returned to Wilton early in the evening. Anna did not accompany them; but the little Havilands went, with great delight, and Mr. Newstead drove them; and Anna lingered till their return, reading to her father.

Anna went early to her chamber. She entered, hoping to meet the peace that usually breathed there. It was a quiet, pleasant room, that had collected many associations from past days. There was the window where her desk was placed, — where she sat to write; here, the window where she sat at work. Certain books stood on the shelf by her favorite seat, which were like old friends, in their kindly expression; and pleasant, long-loved pictures looked down from the walls with encouraging glances.

Anna threw a shawl about her, and opened the window. The windows looked out upon the little garden that lay between the house and the hill that rose behind it. It was a glorious night, and the whiteness of the snow made a brilliancy almost as of daylight. The air was clear and

pure, as if spirits might venture to dwell in it. Anna looked up longingly towards the stars; — how she wished through this clear atmosphere she might breathe some message of strength towards Gertrude! Why was it not possible, she asked, with will so strong as hers, and the support she wished to send so spiritual, — why was it not possible, through this undisturbed air, to send it as directly as though she bore it herself? And what was friendly aid, if it must needs be so bounded? Then came the answer, that mortal aid, and the strength of human spirit, was so limited, that one might be led to the highest strength of all. It has been suggested, that when, out of our weakness, we wish to impart a strength to a fellow-sufferer dear to our love, we may, with all the earnestness of our hearts, implore the source of highest power to send down that strength we are too weak to convey. How it is, we can scarcely tell; but we may believe that thus feeble as we are, some influence may arise from ourselves towards Heaven, to gather new strength there, and then descend, a double-fold, a God-protected blessing, into the bosom of the one we had not the strength of our own selves to protect, or venture to support.

"In this letter," wrote Anna to Gertrude, "I must try to send you myself. Since I cannot go, you must try to give an expression to what I write you, such as poor words can hardly convey. How gladly would I be with you, to offer you what strength I can! But, to-night, I feel my own weakness. I wonder why I, also a poor child of doubt and distrust, should venture to give to you any strength and comfort. And I, in the peace of my own chamber, feel how much nearer you, a sufferer, must be to Him who loveth those whom he chasteneth. I have by me a father, mother, dear friends, whose presence cheers me, gives me strength; while you, with your heart bowed down with sorrow, with

unrest, must be the very child that He, who watches when the sparrow dies, must care for! Does he, at times, seem to withdraw his face from us? Do you not remember, Gertrude, how, from one of your favorite mountain summits, we have watched together the cloud-shadows steal over the meadows? Did the thought ever strike us, that the grain that waved beneath the shadow was bowing with sorrow that it had lost the sun for a while? How earnestly would one of the angel-spirits that are watching us here, — how eagerly would such an one, who saw us bowed down, because we could not for a while see God's face clearly, — bear us to some mountain-height, where we could see how short a way above us floated the cloud, — for how short a moment would the veil hang before us!

"Dear Gertrude, if it were any bodily suffering that you were to bear, you would take it nobly. You would look it in the face, as the burthen you must become accustomed to, and learn to lift. We have often repeated together those words of the holy Theresa — 'Let me suffer, or else let me die!' and have thought the path of suffering might be the path that would lead us nearer to God. Can you not, then, look upon this heart-sinking, this present doubt, as one of these God-appointed maladies, that must be borne with courage, like all bodily pain? Think, a moment, what it is you administer to such a suffering. There is this and that outward remedy; but the best and most successful requires one thing, — patience. These remedies must have time to work; and, to get over this time, you must summon up patience. And this greater, this heavier suffering, can be treated in the same way. After all other efforts, we must call in patience.

"We must all have our heavy seasons of doubt; when, through the weakness of our heart or body, we cannot see God clearly, we feel as if he were withdrawn from us.

You say that at such times you doubt my love for you; and even then you reproach yourself for this. And yet, for this you might find some excuse; for earthly love is powerless at times, and shrouded by circumstances; but the love of God for us, — can that ever fail? Is not even this momentary hiding of himself from us what he has chosen for our good? As far as ourselves are concerned, we must look upon it as a malady of the spirit, which we must bear like other illnesses. We must repeat to ourselves the words, 'Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself; for, in the first place, how can you patiently bear your brother's burden, if you will *not bear your own?*"

"It is very hard to learn to wait. When one is anxious to show one's faith in action, it is very hard to sit quietly, and have only one's own heart to look into. It is very hard, when a friend is suffering by our side, to have to sit quietly, with no power to give help, and only the remembrances of neglected opportunities to haunt our hearts. For that reason, do we the more need God's help. If he seem to be far from us, so must we lift ourselves up the more earnestly to him, though our doubting hearts would persuade us that he does not hear.

"I cannot go to you, Gertrude; and perhaps it is better that it is so; — for it is not human aid that you need, for the heavenly aid is close beside you. The spirits that watch beside the bed of the dying hold you, too, beneath the shelter of their wings; and the Highest Spirit, — our Father, — who is summoning one child home, must be drawing the other only the nearer to him!

"It is alone that we must enter upon death, and only alone that we must enter upon the true life here. And yet, only alone in the earthly sense; for we are not alone while the Father is with us!

"Is it the thought of our sin, that puts us far from God? Such a thought should but draw us the nearer.

"'Our God requireth a whole heart, or none; and yet he will accept a broken one!'"

CHAPTER XXXI.

Before Margaret had left, she had sympathized deeply with Anna, in her sorrow for Gertrude. Margaret asked Anna if she did not know any clergyman in Baltimore, whom they might urge to visit Gertrude, and who might, perhaps, strengthen her.

"I wish, indeed, there were some one," said Anna, "whom she might rely upon, — to whom she might appeal. And yet, perhaps, my father is right, and this is a moment that she had better struggle through by herself. She has sympathy around her, which must help her to bear her outward trials."

"But, Anna, if there were a clergyman, one of the, — one of my own Church, how much he might aid her, by calling upon her confessions, — by speaking to her with authority! Can there be anything more elevating to one in doubt, than the voice of one who can say, 'This is the truth'?"

"Suppose, Margaret, in our ignorance, we should send to ask the aid of a clergyman, and he should prove a Mr. Stanley! — O, Margaret! what human being is there can say such and such is the truth? But do not misunderstand me. A clergyman, a man of God, who has taken up his calling from an earnestness in doing his duty, and with an eager searching after the good, must have, indeed, learnt, somewhere, to answer the most difficult questions of our hearts.

He has found out, by experience, what are the different trials of the heart; he has found, from the words of Jesus, what are the sources of comfort for the broken-hearted; he has learnt to sympathize in others' sorrows, and the path of duty to him has been the path of prayer. Such an one might, indeed, be able to speak with authority; for the words of Christ are familiar words to him, and it might be an inexpressible relief to Gertrude to appeal to him. But there are certain points in Gertrude's trials, that she must go through alone. She has, in part, poured out to me her trials; but she must have deeper ones below. It is not concerning the form of religion that she is uncertain. She doubts whether there is such a thing, — whether the God of whom she has always heard is a living and true God. She has seen, and acknowledges, that, to those whom she loves and respects, He is so, — to you and to me. But she has not yet found the strength to call upon Him as her father, — to throw all her doubts and her fears upon Him who careth for us. At such a time, I feel she is nearer God than you or I, — than the most learned man of the world, — preacher or theologian; for, while she is thus groping after Him, we may be sure that she will find Him, sooner or later. I would wish to go to her now, because I see that a great part of her weakness arises from bodily weakness, and I might help to soothe it. I do not think I could offer her other aid."

Margaret recalled the time when a human arm interposed between her and temptation. She began to ask herself whether, had it not been for that interposition, she had yielded, — had fallen into the sin of Catholicism. But she hushed the question, as she had lately hushed all questions.

The next day, when Mr. Wilkie came home from the factories, he told Anna that he found a certain patent

business would call him to Washington; that he thought he might perhaps accomplish it as well now as later in the season; and, in consideration of her earnest desire to go to see her friend Gertrude, he would take Anna with him. He could not leave till the next day, and he must be a day in New York. But Anna was willing to bear the delay, when she found she might, indeed, see Gertrude, and be with her before the end of the week.

Anna was therefore prepared at the appointed time, — had bade farewell to Margaret, who agreed to be with Mrs. Wilkie as much as possible, — and found herself actually seated in the cars, on her way to Baltimore.

Travelling was a new enjoyment to her, and exhilarated her. She rejoiced in every new object that met her eye, — the mountains covered with snow, and all the magnificent beauty of the winter scenery, attracted her without, while she found pleasure, too, in watching her fellow-passengers, and listening to their occasional conversation with her father, within.

"I met your father," said one of their companions to Anna, "last spring, and I was reminded, in summer, of something he said to me. I was complaining, as farmers are apt to do, of the late frost, that cut off our promise of fruit, and groaning at what we should do without it. You gave me, Mr. Wilkie, somewhat of a sermon, upon my making trouble before the day of trouble came. It turned out that we had more fruit upon our trees than anybody could eat. I hear it even rotted in the market; for everybody was so afraid of the cholera, no one would eat it. So, first we groaned because we should not have fruit to eat, and next we groaned because we could not eat that we had. So we might, at least, have saved our first groaning."

"And the second, too," said Mr. Wilkie, "in the faith that since the first dispensation was not an unmerciful one, the second might have its benefits and its uses too."

At Springfield, a Mr. Smith joined them, who had met Mr. Wilkie before, and who attached himself to Anna most perseveringly, and proved something of a bore. He had one idea, which no turn of conversation could drive him from. He was on his way to Congress, to see if he could not get a law passed for the benefit of authors, to prevent their characters from being stolen out of their books. He was an agent for many English, as well as American authors.

"Do you mean," asked Anna, when Mr. Smith first spoke of this, "a law of copyright?"

"Not at all, Miss Wilkie; it is far less commonplace. This law is to prevent one of the most heinous of plagiarisms, — that of dragging the dramatis personæ out of one book, to decorate another. Imagine the feelings of an author, who, with all the talent and genius he was capable of, has wrought out the form of a hero or heroine, — it may have been the work of a lifetime, — what are his sensations, to see this favorite work of his mind brought into the pages of a second-rate writer, who has seized upon a borrowed hero or heroine, because he had not the wit to make one for himself."

Anna remarked, she did not know such piracy was common.

Mr. Smith went on.

"It is worse than an author's stealing a whole book. What would Powers do, to see his Head of Proserpine placed, by some pirate of sculpture, on his own figure of Joan of Arc? You smile, Miss Wilkie; but such inconsistencies are not infrequent."

And Mr. Smith went on to relate several instances of such theft, which had lately occurred.

It was a fine night on the Sound, and Anna sat on deck, watching the waves that would not be bound in ice by the cold winds. Her father was talking, at a little distance, upon the last speech in Congress. Even here, Mr. Smith followed her.

"You are admiring the moon, and no wonder! You have a right to the moon, — every one has a right to the moon; — there is no borrowed property here."

"Indeed, you are wrong, Mr. Smith," said Anna, a little disturbed, perhaps; "the moon is one of the borrowers. She takes all her light from the sun; and she ought to come among the list of those you proscribe. And we all follow her example, too; we are very dependent each upon the other, and must all borrow something."

"Ah," said Mr. Smith, "I yield; I never argue with a lady; ladies do not understand argument. I find it always ends in their flying to metaphysics, and there I cannot follow them."

Anna wished she might fly to metaphysics, if she could have a hope of Mr. Smith's not following her; and she took refuge with her father, who proposed a quick walk on the deck, before she should retire to her cabin.

Anna was received very cordially by Mrs. Newton, in New York, notwithstanding Mrs. Newton was in full preparation for a large ball that evening. But she succeeded in making Anna feel at home, insisting upon her resting herself in the morning, and afterwards letting Isabel and one of her sons carry her to all that would interest her most in New York, that she could see in one day. She also prevailed upon her to be present at the ball, in the evening. Anna scarcely felt the spirit for a ball; but she yielded to

Mrs. Newton's request. She felt as if it might be as good for her as to go over and over again, — as she was inclined to, when by herself, — her approaching meeting with Gertrude, — wondering how she should find her, and almost dreading her first outbreak of sadness and despair.

What a contrast was the present scene to all such thoughts! Yet there was something pleasant in being a looker-on in such a gay, bewildering scene, — for every face was strange there except those of Mrs. Newton's family. The brilliant music excited her. She felt very glad she was not one of the actors, for she feared her head might grow too dizzy. As it was, she was at liberty to listen quietly to music such as had never met her ear before. As she passed through the rooms, George Newton told her something of the different persons they met, and the names and histories of the different brilliant beauties of the night. One or two of the gentlemen were introduced to her; but she felt herself too tired, and too bewildered, to make herself agreeable, or to get beyond the common party talk; and perhaps George was not successful in his selections. She was very glad when she could, at last, ensconce herself in a quiet corner, where she could, unobserved, watch what was going on. The music came to her in rich and flowing strains; young and happy faces were before her; admiring mothers were looking upon their daughters. Presently Anna raised her eyes to a painting on the wall opposite. It was of a misty coloring, representing a light, girlish figure, surrounded with floating hair. The delicate blue eyes looked out bewilderingly upon the scene below, and it seemed as if the vague outline of the figure would melt away with the music. George Newton had told Anna this was a picture of one of Scott's heroines, and had left her to guess who it was. Anna was rather glad to fancy it whom

she pleased, and admired the contrast between its quiet loveliness and the brilliant gayety it seemed to look upon. It faded, — it grew bright again, — sometimes it seemed to gaze at her beseechingly, as if to ask if it might not float away. At last, Anna fancied the supplicating glance of the eye was like that of Gertrude; and a tone and a voice came to her, like Gertrude's, with words she had heard Gertrude utter, — "To be in the world, yet not of the world!"

When, at last, Anna's head rested upon the pillow, and all was still again in the house, that had been so echoing with gay voices and music, she slept, but not quietly. She was visited with dreams. She fancied she stood on the sea-shore with Gertrude, — with Gertrude, who wore the same long golden hair, and beseeching glance, the figure in the picture wore. The moon left a white path on the sea; and Gertrude insisted she would walk out upon it, and meet the moon. Anna followed her, when soon Gertrude's courage failed, — she sank, but in Anna's arms. Anna bore her to the shore, and some one seemed to help her raise Gertrude's fainting figure. As she turned, to see who was with her, she met the face of Mr. Smith. "Tell me, Miss Wilkie," he inquired, "is she original?"

CHAPTER XXXII.

At last, Anna had arrived in Baltimore. She had stayed a day in Philadelphia, and had met there an old school friend.

On her arrival in Baltimore with her father, they heard that, the day before, Aunt Clara had died. Mr. Lester told Mr. Wilkie that she had passed quietly away, without

apparent suffering. Anna went eagerly to Gertrude, and, on meeting her, Gertrude wept bitterly.

"I am very glad to see you, — how glad, I cannot tell!"

Gertrude afterwards was able to speak of her Aunt Clara's death, — of how gently and beautifully it had approached her.

"She was able to say a few words to me, on the last day, — words which I shall never forget. They were as full of faith as her life had been. 'This is not death,' she said; 'I am entering upon a fresher life.' I said, 'If I might only hope to share it!' — for Aunt Clara seemed then so strong I did not restrain myself. Then she said, 'It will come to you, here; only seek after it, dear Gertrude.' O, Anna, if there were ever any one ripe for a higher life, she was indeed ready!"

Afterwards, Gertrude came to speak of herself. "What a sad letter I wrote to you; and how like yourself you answered it! Let me tell you, that, not long after I wrote to you, I seemed to feel some relief from that state of mind, when I suffered more grievously than you can ever know. You see I speak of it as something of the past, already. Aunt Clara, at that time, wished me to read to her from the Bible. Gradually the words came to me with a new sense and power. To *me*, I say; for, before, I had read them as if not addressed to myself. At first, the Psalms touched me most, because I felt they were the words of a human being, — one who had occasionally sinned, — who, though beloved of God, felt an abasement before him. The words, 'My soul thirsteth for God, for the *living* God,' rung in my ears, — upon my heart. Then came the calm, beautiful words of Jesus towards me — 'Not the righteous, but the sinner, came I to call to repentance;' and also the words, 'A bruised reed shall he not break.' I longed to walk towards him. Then it was my Aunt Clara needed all my thoughts

and care. And when the hour I had dreaded had come, had gone, — when her lips had closed forever, and her eyes would never more be raised to smile upon me, — then I looked back upon myself. For once, I had forgotten myself; my mind had been filled with other thoughts; and when I looked back upon my heart, it seemed, for a moment, to be healed. A new peace stole into it, and a new strength. It was as if the spirit that seemed to pass away had drawn nearer, to uphold, to sustain me. My prayers, that had begun, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? — Be merciful to me a sinner!' — changed to, 'My father, draw near thy child, very weary and heavy laden!'

"O, Anna! tell me, will this new peace pass away? Is it too sudden to be a true peace? And yet, I do not call it quite peace; it is a hope that looks forward to future action to bring peace. Aunt Clara's words are in my ears, — 'A new life here;' — I hope to seek after this. I have formed plans for the future. I will tell them you. I think they will have your approval; and when my resolutions fail me, your letter shall be by my side, to strengthen me."

"Not that alone, Gertrude!"

"Ah, no! But, tell me, is this merely an excitement I feel, — this strength that rises from my old despair? Can I not, indeed, depend upon it?"

"It may be excitement, Gertrude, but not the less to be depended upon. Such excitements are sent to us, to *call* us *out* from ourselves, — from our old ways. The death of a dear friend, — the passing away of one of our strong supports here, — must be intended for some great purpose. We must listen to it, — must obey its impulse. If we let this season of awakening pass away, how great must be the shock we shall need to awaken us anew! If we do not let this answer its purpose, if it does not serve to show us our

Father, then have we allowed a great opportunity to pass away. It is the voice of God; — we must let it speak to our hearts.

"This feeling of strength may indeed be only for the present. It may be as foreign to your nature as the former season of despair; but let it serve to lift you up to a higher platform. Entire rest, — it may not lift us up to that; — but it has given strength to conquer one temptation. The next may be of a higher nature, but this struggle has given power to meet even that; and after a conquest, Gertrude, a struggle is not so fearful. By and by, you will smile at this longing for repose. You will feel that action, that struggle, is necessary for your existence.

"I do not think you can call this a sudden feeling that has awakened you. Have you not, a long time, felt a desire for a stronger life, — for something strong to lean upon? At least, as long ago as last September, during your illness, we spoke together of such. Do you remember how earnestly we spoke together of self-sacrifice? And now you feel the right moment has arrived."

Gertrude had tasted not only of self-sacrifice, but of self-forgetfulness. She had learned, perhaps, the difference between the two; for the earnestness of self-sacrifice, even in the most sincere, creates at times a self-consciousness. Perhaps this is what we may trace on the most beautiful Magdalens, by Carlo Dolci. The expression of the figure is that of self-abasement; — the beautiful hair falls neglected, as if scarcely worthy wherewith to wipe the master's feet; the hands are clasped around the vase of precious ointment, as if in an agony of repentance; and the eyes are raised imploringly, tearless. But around the mouth there lingers a smile of self-consciousness, that takes away from the sincerity of the expression, unless we may believe that,

in the glory of triumph, there can be allowed one moment of self-satisfaction. But it is a higher state of progress, where the soul has passed through the struggle of self-sacrifice and self-abasement, and reached the power of, — at least, for a few moments, — of forgetting itself.

There are times when the soul, earnest after good, drives out the thought of itself, earnestly seeks after the Father, and enthrones him in the mansion left cleared and empty. These are the high moments of the truest prayer and self-devotion; or, they are moments of communion, when the soul has called in the aid of friendly spirits, and knocked at the door of Christ. And glorious are the hours of self-abasement; yet sad and fearful, when the soul prostrates itself before God, shuddering at its own darkness, dazzled at the light of the Most High!

But the hour of victory is when the soul has learned to forget itself. There are some who pass through this life with this joyous mien of self-forgetfulness. It seems no struggle to them to welcome each one to their hearts, with a true warmth, — to pour out upon those around them a never-ceasing flow of devotion. Theirs is a sunny smile, that nothing clouds, — an energy that never fails. We praise the happy temper that makes their life so easy, and their path so plain. Their visiting on earth is an angelic visiting, and we call their virtue angelic, — it seems natural to their souls. If we could rend the veil that hangs before their hearts, might we not read how this self-forgetfulness came out of struggle and self-sacrifice? Morning and evening prayer, and nightly tears, have been the sacrifice; and new-born resolutions, each day, have given strength for the offering. These have arisen in solitude, and have required an anxious search into the heart. But daily action, — action for the sake of good to others, — is needed to pre-

serve this utter forgetfulness of self. These must indeed be the moments when the soul, like Mary, prostrates itself at the feet of Jesus, in repentant agony; but it must come out from the closet of devotion, and put on the garb of Martha, and offer up every separate moment for the good of those around, in order to find the happiness of a true self-abandonment.

It was happy for Gertrude that there was a path plainly open before her. It is very hard to be obliged "to make for one's self duties, — to choose self-denial, only to have an aim in life, only to obey the call for consuming occupation." It was more fortunate for Gertrude; yet this way of duty that now lay before her had never before seemed so clear. She had fancied, before, her mind was not fitted to take charge of her father's household, — that her self-cultivation would be interfered with, if she should undertake the education of her brothers and sisters, — that she needed herself to go into the school of Nature, and to seek a different circle from the one by which she was surrounded. Because the society she mingled in was not at the time according to her taste, she had decided to retire into herself, and find communion enough in Nature. Now, she not only believed that in her own home lay her true duty, — the duty that was nearest her, — but she could acknowledge it was even best for her own improvement, and calculated to strengthen her character; and felt as if she might almost welcome the trials it would bring, as a fresh field of action.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

When New Year's Eve came, Margaret was spending her holidays at Mr. Wilkie's. She sat, after they had separated for the night, at her open journal. She had lost the habit of making an entry here every day; but she always kept the book by her, and recurred to it, when reminded of it, with peculiar interest. It almost always happened, — as, probably, it does to all journal owners, — that she was led to turn back over its pages of strange variations of ink, and stranger variations of emotion, when the end of the year came round.

As Margaret turned over the pages of the large volume which had been her confidential friend when she had no other confidant, she could almost have smiled to see how those pages fell open, almost of themselves, at some particular passages, which had either been turning-points of her life, or had contained some of her uncle's most important directions for her. To-night, however, she did not smile, consciously, at any such observation. She had the images of all the past, strangely inwoven with all the present, before her. She was grave and thoughtful. Her thoughts centred around one point, namely, her increasing intimacy with persons not of the "Church of England," and her questions as to whether such intimacy were or were not dangerous.

In such thought, Margaret did not smile; but she did start, when the subject of her meditation seemed to start out from the page, in these words of her uncle. How well she remembered the agony of heart with which she wrote them there! The blisters of her hot tears of that night were still upon the paper.

"To change from one church to another," he had said, "involves the possibility of a sin, from which we pray continually to be delivered; that sin which is numbered with sedition, rebellion, hardness of heart, and the contempt of God's commandments, — the sin of schism."*

"Here it comes up again," said Margaret, sadly, to herself; "the one thought to which New Year's Eve is to be given. If so, I will think it out;" and she took her pen, turned to a fair page in the journal-book, and wrote, in large, clear letters:

"*December* 31*st*, 1849, 11½ *P. M.*

"What is *schism?*

"With my pen in my hand, I shall think more clearly. I shall not go over and over again the same ground.

"I have just been reading my uncle's warning against *schism.*

"I am sure it is a sin.

"But who are they who are guilty of it?

"It is only to-day, that, as I read the Litany, I recollected, at the words 'from all false doctrine, heresy, and schism,' how earnestly Arthur Newstead repeated them at my side, when we were together, at St. James's Church, the other day. Yet, I think my uncle would call him a schismatic, if he heard him express his horror of uniformity.

"And I am sure that horror is sincere."

She rose from the table, and in a large Cruden, which she had brought up from the library a day or two before, looked for the word *schism*, in the Bible. She copied the one passage where it occurs in our version.

"1 Cor. 12: 25. That there should be no schism in the

* Margaret Percival, II., 165.

body; but that the members should have the same care one for another."

Margaret went on with her writing.

"This is the chapter, again, which Mr. Harrod quoted from, that same day, — which Mr. Wilkie is so fond of. I do not wonder.

"How grandly confident it is! 'No man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.' Can it be, — surely it says so, — that when one feels that 'Jesus is the Lord,' he is, in that instant, and so long as he truly says so, the receiver of the Greatest Spiritual Gift? That, then, in that moment, and so long as that confession is true, he is a member of the body of which Jesus is Head?

"Clearly enough, there had been some wild division there. Some one had cursed Jesus. He and his are those whose spiritual gifts the Apostle denies.

"And those who said 'Jesus was Lord' said the truth, — spoke by a true spirit, — a holy spirit, or *the* Holy Spirit: for there can be but one.

"That is what he says. He must have meant so.

"But if he meant so, there must be different, very different forms of worship.

"Would the One God mean that his children should worship him in such different ways?"

And then her eye fell on the verses following, of which, in this same connection, she had been reminded before. Without adding a word to them, she drew a bold dash under the question she had written above, and copied, in clear hand:

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

"There are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord.

"There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all."

She dashed another heavy line across the paper, and dropped her head in her hands, upon the table. When she rose again, it was to write, —

"Of course there are. Do I not know that our Church only claims to be a branch of the Catholic Church Universal?

"Did not my uncle commend to me even some books of other apostolic churches? That brings me back again. It is the old question I had on board the ship, about Mr. Ernest. What are apostolic churches?

"Or, in a word, I am where I began, — *What is schism?*

"'That there should be no schism in the body.' The figure of *the body* is the same as that used through the whole chapter."

She turned back to the beginning of the passage "As the body is one, and hath many members, * * * * so, also, is Christ." She read the whole through attentively, till again she came to the words "that there should be no *schism* in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another."

"The same care!" said Margaret, aloud, laying down her pen. "Then one church is as much bound to care for another, as my hand to save my eye, or my eye to watch for my hand.

"And it is the same thing for a strong church, self-styled so, to say of a weak one, 'I have no need of thee,' as for

the comely part of the body to say, to the uncomely, 'I have no need of thee.'"

She took her pen again:

"I catch myself saying 'a strong church,' or 'a weak church.' Of course, I mean a strong branch of the Great Catholic Church."

Then, after a minute's pause, she added, "How wrong it has been to speak of our Episcopal Church as '*The* Church!'

"Henceforward let me say, 'My branch of *the* Church.'"

She ran her eye back again over her journal. There were the words "the English Church," as if there could be but one branch of the one Church of Christ in England; "the Scotch Church," as if Knox and all the Presbyterian martyrs were nothing; "the American Church," a phrase which swept out all her new friends, except the Fetridges, the Rosses, and the Braces.

And even her uncle, so careful, sometimes, had said to her, "You have but to remember, that the English Church claims to be the true Church.* When she caught sight of that, she returned to her writing, made a reference to the passage, and added:

'This was not my uncle's way. He would have said, if he had thought, — he must have said, — *a* true Church."

Her pen stopped, and she heaved a sigh, from a thought which had made her sigh often. She wrote then:

"To think that such hastinesses of conversation, jotted

* Margaret Percival, II., 171.

down here by a poor girl, in agony, should have gone into print, to be read by, — who knows who, — or where?"

She walked, back and forth, across her room, replenished the fire, lighted another lamp, read again the 12th chapter of Corinthians, and again sat in thought.

Then she wrote slowly, and in a careful hand-writing, with that earnest desire to be accurate, which, through such a medium as hand-writing only, gives a physiognomy to our journals and our letters:

"There is to be as much honor given to one member of the body as another, that there be no *schism.*

"There would be schism, if one member said to another, '*I have no need of thee.*'

"Paul tried to hinder that."

Stopping and thinking, she wrote again, half unconsciously:

"There would be schism, if one member said to another, '*I have no need of thee.*'"

And then she added, more hastily, and she shut the book upon the words as she had written them:

"If, then, every one who says *Jesus is the Lord* is moved by the Very Holy Spirit of God, — is, therefore, a member of The Body of which Christ is Head, — why, then, —

"That person who speaks of her branch of the Church as *The* Church, or, to any person acknowledging Jesus as Lord, says, '*I have no need of thee,*' she is guilty of *schism*, if of nothing else.

"Queen of schismatics!

'Banner-bearer of Division!"

She began to undress herself. But, before she extinguished her light, she took her pen again.

"I wrote in excitement, though I tried to be so cool. I suppose this is the truth: —

"That any member which exaggerates its own importance above any other member, is *most* guilty of the sin of schism."

After she had retired to bed, but long before she slept, Margaret wondered whether Arthur Newstead, in praying to be delivered from *schism*, was thinking of persons who call Episcopalians "Churchmen" and "Churchwomen," as if there were no other "Churchmen." And a set of such questions fell upon her, till she dropped asleep. Then she dreamed, — it came of the talk about budding, a few days before, — that she was cutting off, with her garden scissors, all the branches, but one, of a fruit-tree; — that her uncle was standing by, hindering her when she cut at some, and encouraging her when she cut at others; while Arthur Newstead seemed to be putting sticks into the way of the shears, all the time, as she moved them.

But her dreams did not last long, before she sank into unbroken sleep.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A CHORUS of "Happy New Year" cheered the Wilkie's breakfast table. It was their first breakfast after Anna and her father had returned. It was a glorious morning, and they all came together in fit cheer for the beginning of the new year. Then followed, for the twentieth time, the dis-

cussion of the last week, whether or no a new half-century had begun. Then, just before the family rose from breakfast, Anna said,

"How different the last hour of night from the first of morning! — how different to our feelings, I mean."

"Everybody smiles," said her father, "and some of us smile gravely. It would be worth while to know what we all thought over, in the last hour of the last year."

Margaret did not shudder, but it was hard to repress a shudder; and she was really relieved when Mrs. Wilkie said that none of them would be willing to tell the whole, and that half would be worse than nothing.

"What would happen," asked Anna, in a meditative, really inquiring, doubtful mood, which did not seem like her — "what would happen if everybody did what he resolves upon, just before going to bed? If we carried out the enthusiasms, schemes, dreams, plans and hopes, of the winding up of our day, instead of going to work, as we do, in the morning, with clear heads, and hearts beating more methodically?"

"The world would be saved!" said Arthur Newstead. "It would be new made, — new born!"

"I dare say," said Mr. Wilkie, "that more people would go to Jerusalem."

"We should have more variety," said Mrs. Wilkie. "Tuesday would be very little like Monday; and Wednesday would not recognize Tuesday."

"Aunt Anna," whispered Julia Haviland to her, "I should *give up* better to Fanny. I always mean to, when I say my prayers, and go to sleep. But next day I forget."

This was as they left the table. Margaret went immediately to her room.

"Thank God," said she to herself, "that *I* am less

excited and more cool than I was last night, or I do not know where I might have gone. Now I can do what is sensible, and what I ought to have done, a week ago, or more.

"O dear! — I wish my uncle was here!" she said, aloud.

And then, opening her desk, she began the note to Mr. Ross, the clergyman which she had been long hearing.

MARGARET TO MR. ROSS.

"*Mr. Wilkie's, Jan.* 1, 1850.

"My Dear Mr. Ross: —

"A happy New Year to you and Mrs. Ross."

So far was very easy. But here Margaret's usually ready pen stopped. She took another piece of paper, and began to draw pictures on it. There was Mr. Harrod's pulpit. Then, a myriad of little square windows. Then, a profile of her uncle. Then, a kneeling figure in a surplice, meant for her brother George. Then, on that page, she wrote: —

"Dear Mr. Ross: —

"What is Schism?

"May I read Sterling's Hymns?

"Do you think it safe for me to stay here at Mr. Wilkie's?

"Can you lend me Furness' Family Prayers, or is it not a book for a Churchwoman?"

Then she scratched out Churchwoman, and wrote — "for one of our branch of the Church to read."

"There," said she, "that is what I want to ask him! What a pity I cannot send the questions just so! But I must try my eloquence *du billet*." And she pushed aside her scribbling paper, and again took the sheet of note paper.

"In a conversation with a friend," she wrote, "he spoke so highly of Sterling's Poems, that —"

She stopped, took another sheet of paper, and began again. Having passed through new year, she went on thus: —

"My dear uncle, the clergyman whom I have always most trusted, has taught me never to tamper * with Romish books, either of doctrine, instruction, or devotion. He taught me that the last, because I imbibed their spirit unconsciously, from admiring the holy and elevated spirit which breathed through many of them, were the most dangerous, coming to me at unguarded moments. Do you think there is the same danger in the devotional books of Latitudinarian —"

She scratched out "Latitudinarian," and wrote, "of Dissenters. A friend of mine," —

Here, again, she stopped. "I have spoiled the sheet!" said she. "I will go and see him. There is Uncle Andrew's sleigh, at the door, now. How absurd to write, when one can talk!"

Uncle Andrew was only too glad to have a companion. A brisk sleigh-ride brought them to the parsonage.

"No," said Margaret, smiling, to Mrs. Ross' kindly invitation to her, to come "right up stairs into the nursery," — "no, thank you; my call is for Mr. Ross, this morning."

"I am afraid he is engaged. A gentleman has just come to him, with a letter of introduction from Mr. Harrod."

Margaret found it so. The engagement, of course, of Mr. Ross, would not have troubled her. But when she found that the gentleman was an agent of the American Bible Society, who had come to see Mr. Ross on business

* Margaret Percival, II., 248.

connected with the distribution of Bibles in the country, in which Mr. Harrod, also, was interested, she felt as if one of her main questions, on the connection of the Episcopal Church in America with other religious organizations, was in a way to be answered before she had asked it.

The gentlemen were evidently busy, so she withdrew into the nursery. Mrs. Ross welcomed her cordially. Margaret saw that she interrupted a sort of home school. She begged them to go on, saying that she was used to that duty herself, at home; and, indeed, she made herself so much at home with little Alice, that Belle soon went on with her occupation with her mother.

"Mr. Ross has given Belle, for her New Year's present, this pretty, new edition of Watts's Songs," said Mrs. Ross. "And, for her New Year's lesson, Belle is learning, —

> "Great God, with wonder and with praise
> On all thy works I look."

"My question about John Sterling is answered, then," said Margaret to herself. She looked up, a little puzzled, to Mrs. Ross. "You are not afraid to let the children read Watts's Hymns?"

"Afraid? no! — some of them are poor; but I trust them to forget that."

"I meant, — I thought, — in short, I was under Roman influences at one time, and my uncle, a clergyman, charged me to give up all Roman books of devotion. I have doubted, — whether, — here, — where all the influences seem so much those of Dissent, — I ought not give up all books of Dissenters, for the same reason."

"O!" was the amazed reply of poor Mrs. Ross. "I never thought of any danger."

"You know Watts died a Unitarian."

"Yes! — though I do not know what the Unitarians do with all his hymns. Somehow, the Psalms of David are in the Prayer-book. I can't think this little book will ever hurt Belle."

Poor Belle stood, with her eyes wide open, wondering what was the matter with her New Year's present.

"I do not believe my husband, — I do not believe we are so timid in such points as you are in England. I think we have Dissenters, as you call them, for teachers in our Sunday-school. Young men and women who have never been confirmed, and perhaps do not assent to all the Articles; but are glad to be of use, and whom we are glad to call in, any way. You know ours is the only Church in the village."

"Then there can be two Churches in an American village!" said Margaret to herself, as she went down stairs, in answer to a message from Mr. Ross.

Margaret opened frankly with Mr. Ross on what she wanted. She told him that her uncle was a clergyman; that he had taught her that a member of the Episcopal Church should apply to a teacher of it for light in such difficulties as she was in, and not attempt to work them out by a layman's unassisted counsel; — that, therefore, she had come to him. For, that she found herself more and more attracted and interested by Dissenters; that they had made no attempt to remove her from the communion of her own Church, — of her own branch of the Church. But that, without any effort of theirs, she began to feel that their arrangements answered their purpose. She could not feel, as she once did, a cool satisfaction that all Dissenters were in terrible danger. It did not seem to her that they were in any danger at all.

She told him that once she had supposed that the unity

of the Christian Church was to be gained only by all Dissenters joining an Episcopal system; — but that lately she had been tempted to think that the less uniformity existed, there more unity might be. She told him that her uncle had taught her that "Unitarians calling themselves Christians," "Baptists enforcing adult baptism," "Wesleyans, Independents, and the countless sects of the present day," could not make up the "one body" described by St. Paul; * — that she had believed him, because he was her teacher; but that lately she knew her belief to that extent was weakened.

"I formerly thought," continued she, "that there could be no liberality among Dissenters,† such as I was inclined to practise; but here I have been welcomed, with the utmost liberality, by Dissenters of every wing. I had supposed they were all strenuously asserting their own rights; but here there seems no need to assert them.

"Again," said she, "my uncle once blamed me for speaking of a Unitarian clergyman.‡ I find I fall into such language here, again; and I cannot recall the argument by which he showed me I was wrong, if, indeed, he made any. Of taste, I am hardly willing to speak. I never ought to have thought of it, in a question of principle. But I did; — and straws show the wind. I remember saying," — and she blushed, — "at a very trying time of my life, that I could not endure extemporaneous prayers and preachings.§ I had, perhaps, never heard five; and my experience on shipboard, and my experience here, has even changed my feeling of taste. I am greatly impressed, sometimes, — I join, very cordially, — in Mr. Wilkie's family prayers; and it seems to me as if a habit of devotion which was good enough for

* Margaret Percival, I., 122.
† Ibid, p. 141.
‡ Ibid, p. 178.
§ Ibid, p. 192.

Mary Magdalene, and Dorcas, and Lydia, ought to have passed unchallenged by me."

The excitement of opening her heart and feeling to a stranger wrought powerfully upon Margaret. She spoke more and more nervously, and almost broke, at one moment, into tears.

There followed a painful pause.

"Do not distress yourself," said Mr. Ross; "but, pray command yourself, and go on. You interest me greatly."

"I do not know which to select," said Margaret; "but a thousand straws show me that I have been hasty in supposing that I had exhausted all my history of religious inquiry. For instance: I have learned, I believe, that the authority of our branch of the Church is Divine; but, lately, I am questioning, constantly, why God may not direct as many varieties of Church government as of family government.

"I remember, again, how terribly I was distressed at thinking our English colonies must be absolutely heathen, because so few clergymen of the Establishment were in them.* But, lately,—I believe an article of Macaulay's led to it, and a talk with Mr. Wilkie confirmed it,—it has seemed to me as if those gallant Methodist preachers, who go out so freely among the pioneers, might do them as much good as even our clergymen would do.

"I am afraid you are shocked; but let me go on, and, in one or two instances more, you shall know just what you have to be shocked at, and why I tell you all this.

"I was once in real personal distress, surrounded by afflictions,—and, worst of all, of course, it seemed to me that even my prayers were not answered.† I thought, and was taught to think, that this faithless feeling in me sprang from my own conceit; because, at that time, I was engaged

* Margaret Percival, I., 222. † Ibid, II., p. 103.

in inquiry as to the grounds of the Establishment. But I have found, since, that the most vigilant religious inquirer whom I ever knew, — Anna Wilkie, — is one of the most fervent, faithful, and sustained Christians I have ever known; and I have seen another person, of my own age and sex, whose name I need not mention, who had just the same fears that I had, where, I am sure, they did not arise from theological inquiry.

"Now, sir, I have analyzed, carefully, you see, all these influences. Day and night, I have seen where I stand. And, understand me distinctly, that nobody has attempted or thought to induce me to leave our communion. Understand me again, that the Church of my fathers is as dear to me as ever. But I am aware, — in the examination of every night, I discover, — that my feeling towards the different forms of Dissent is very fast changed. I begin to feel that there was something pharisaical in my talk, when I said, '*Even* the Dissenters admit this,' — or, '*Even* the Unitarians say that.'

"This brings me to the question I have come to ask you. Is there danger in this state of heart and conscience? Once, an effort was made, by very dear friends, to convert me from our communion. But, I may say, I think that all my girlish enthusiasm for them was not equal to my woman's love for these kind, dear friends whose intercourse thus surrounds me. The attack, then, on my form of worship, was not nearly as severe as is the toleration of to-day.

"For, you see, they look on our peculiarities simply as of the outside. My real religious life was never more active, my religious emotions and convictions never more strong, than with these people. Conversation, in our little circles, where every form of Dissent meets, takes a religious

turn, — a serious turn, — quite as often as it ever did at Alton, my old home.

"I know, therefore, that because they treat our organization, our branch of the Church, as an exact equal sister, nothing less and nothing more than their own, — I know, I say, that I am more tempted to consider her so myself, than I could have been by any such assault upon her, as, — as I have said, — was once attempted upon me.

"Tell me, sir," — Margaret tried to speak coolly, and the very effort showed the intensity of her feeling, — "tell me if all this position is dangerous for me!

"Do not be afraid to tell me. I have made sacrifices," — her voice choked a little, — "I can make them again. I have sacrificed friends, the dearest; books, which I most loved; hopes, which were brightest; dreams, which were most gorgeous, — at the bidding of a priest of our Church. I can do so again, if it is necessary.

"But I know, — my uncle has taught me, — that a woman, that a layman, must be very doubtful about trusting her conscience, or his conscience;* — that he may have too much of reading and argument;† that I must not rely on my own judgment or persuasion,‡ but that I must consult a clergyman, in such a matter.§ Nay, my most latitudinarian friends have reminded me of this, here.

"And so I have come to ask you what I shall do. If you direct me, on your authority as a priest of our Church, to renounce these acquaintances as dangerous, and to put by all the books of Dissenters, I am here, ready, from this moment, to obey. It shall be my New Year's resolution."

And there was a pause. Mr. Ross did not, for a few minutes, attempt an answer to this passionate appeal.

* Margaret Percival, II., 216.
† Ibid, II., 264.
‡ Ibid, II., 169.
§ Ibid, II., 164.

To confess the whole truth, Mr. Ross is the only person mentioned in this book with whom we, its compilers, have not absolutely confidential intercourse. But we do not know from him, — he has not answered our circular letters, — just what he felt, as he listened to this appeal.

Without knowing, we *suspect* that he was embarrassed at the consciousness of the different estimate which the priests of the Episcopal Church in England take of her position, from that which intelligent brethren of theirs in the Episcopal Church of America take of her position. He had been troubled, before, by finding that English Episcopal books would assume a tone wholly unknown to the public ministrations of the most of the Episcopal pulpits in America.

Be this as it may, however, we do not know; we can only tell what happened.

"What danger, — do you mean, — Miss Percival?" said he, with a little the air of a man who would gain time.

"The danger of encouraging schism, by learning to love schismatics, as I do those of our Church," replied she, instantly. "Are these friends of mine schismatics? Indeed, are they Christians?"

"O, Miss Percival! far be it from me to decide hastily as to the Christianity of another! Let God be the keeper of that question!"

"I wish," said Margaret, half aside, "that all clergymen were as modest. They are not true Christians, if they are guilty of schism. Now, do I, or do I not, owe it to my allegiance to our Church, to 'come out from among them'? Ought I, or ought I not, save myself from the danger of coming to regard their church establishments as being as much God's handiwork, God's branches, as mine is?"

"Why, we must feel, — I am sure you feel, Miss Perci-

val, — that our order is the most dignified, our noble Liturgy the most elevated form of worship — "

"For us. I feel it all, — yourself not more so. Just as completely do I feel that it is not so for them. Is it dangerous for me to continue in the association which has led me to that tolerance which I am sure I had not when I left England?" She was on the point of saying, "when my biography was written;" but she checked herself just in time.

"You speak, my dear Miss Percival," said Mr. Ross, attempting to recall himself, to express a sense of that authority which she gave him so freely, — "you speak enthusiastically, though you say you have passed your girlish years. It is not, of course, necessary that such a step as you consult me about should be sudden. There is no need of an excited suspension of intimacy. Who knows but your presence among your new friends may not be the means of calling their attention to our order, — to our noble Liturgy? In God's Providence, you may be the medium of calling some of them back to the fold we so much love."

Margaret suppressed an expression of impatience. "As for that, sir," said she, "I do not find wish or opportunity for persuasion, where no attempt is made to persuade me; — where we talk of religion, — of its ordinances, — but almost never of its organizations or machinery. Nor, indeed, can I suppose that a laywoman, who may not argue, and has to receive her directions from clergymen, can be meant to be an instrument of much force in the enlargement of the Church we love.

"In fact," she said, "you do not quite answer my question. I want to speak of my duty to my own personal faith.

"I want to know whether I am encouraging schism.

"I want to know whether, drawn as I am to sympathize with these Christians of other communions, I am bringing dishonor upon Apostolic Churches.

"I want to know just what are, and what are not, 'Apostolic Churches.'

"Do not think I put these questions sceptically," she said; "God knows that I do not. But the reason that they come to my lips so readily is, that my life has suggested them, these three months. And do not think, Mr. Ross, that I, who do not pretend to be strong, who waive all claim at intellectual subtlety, — a woman, and not a masculine woman, — do not think, I say, that I can keep myself in any *medium*, any delicate, any nicely-balanced position. Do not ask me to play a nice part. I can act once for all. I can give up my dear friends, — their books I have not yet ventured on. If their churches are not Christian churches, — if I encourage schism, when I grow to love them with all the fervor of my Christian love, — if I endanger myself, by intercourse with them, I will renounce them.

"If I may keep to them, with the feeling that all these different ways in which different men 'call Jesus the Lord' are only differences of forms where there is one Spirit, I will keep to them, — loving, as you know I must love, to the last, the Church of my birth and training; but making no claim for her that I will not tolerate from them.

"I will do one of these, or the other, if you will tell me which to do."

Mr. Ross again tried to check the excited girl. "Why plunge into extremes?" he said; "it may be that a midway course is the true course, — or a gradual course."

"Not where right and wrong are the two extremes. Pardon me; do not let me say that, for it is as if I were answering my own question.

"But, indeed, my dear sir, here no middle course will answer *my* purpose. I am not a person for midway courses. I wish, — God knows how earnestly, — to continue this delightful Christian friendship. I can do so, if only I may rank these churches, — these forms of faith of my friends, — as sister branches of ours upon the vine. But if, in learning to consider them thus, I am wrong, there is nothing midway for me; I must leave them forever, as I did dear friends, once before.

"I will do so, if you bid me."

Mr. Ross was in some difficulty. He would not dream of asking Margaret to break up her friendly intercourse with her new associates. Yet, for a moment, he seemed at loss how to define the position which he wished her to occupy. She had declined, and on good grounds enough, attempting the duty of a missionary, to convert them from Dissent.

He began again. "Miss Percival, you see that your difficulty does not affect me. I visit your nearest friends, the Wilkies, and do not incur the guilt, either of schism or of lukewarmness, in doing so."

"You are a clergyman. You are ordained, set apart to visit people, in whatever error. If men are in error, it is through you, and those of your calling, that they are to be called back. That is not my position. I have no right to expose myself to temptation. No layman has, if my uncle has directed me rightly." *

"Do I understand you that you feel confused, or troubled, while you are with these friends? Does your conscience tell you that you are wrong?"

"No, indeed!" replied she; "but there, again, at that very crisis which I describe to you, my uncle warned me

* Margaret Percival, II., 79, 164, 169.

against trusting to conscience as my only law. 'Conscience is the plea on which the most fatal crimes have been committed,' he said; 'and the disagreement of conscience from God's law is, in itself, a sin for which we shall surely be called to account, according as we had it in our power to learn the truth.'"*

"Very good," said Mr. Ross; "and that law,—have you studied that?"

"*I* study it! Yes, I studied, for an hour, last night, St. Paul's chapter on schism; and, as far as my opinion went, concluded that I was myself queen of schismatics. But I did not trust my opinion. Our Church directs us to seek her interpretation of Scripture, and not our own.

"For that, I have come to you.

"Am I in danger, by yielding to the conviction that these friends are in true communion with the Great Church Universal?"

Mr. Ross was about to answer again, when the door opened, and a parishioner came in, to see him on some matter about his house-rent, which required immediate attention. The man was an Englishman. A short, general conversation, showed Margaret that in England he had been a Radical. He had been offended, there, by the government connection with the Established Church; and had, with his family, neglected it, and its ordinances. He had been destitute of any public religious advantages for years, therefore. On his emigration, he brought with him his prejudices; but, falling in Mr. Ross' way, and seeing constantly that, with the loss of government patronage, the Episcopal Church here stood, at least, on a simpler footing than at home, his old mother-love of her came back to him.

* Margaret Percival, II., 216.

He had led back his trusting wife there, to her great joy; and America's voluntary system had made again an Episcopalian of the man whom the Establishment had driven away. Such cases are frequent in America.

His call on Mr. Ross could not be postponed. It was with reference to some arrangements about the tenement which he was to occupy in the new quarter.

Uncle Andrew called before he had gone. Mr. Ross was, perhaps, a little gratified for an opportunity to think over Margaret's question. He rose rather hastily, bade her good-morning, and said, "I think I understand your case; let me write to you, and I think I can send you some books which may be of use to you."

Margaret saw that there was no help for the interruption, and she took her leave.

The next day the letter came, and with it a little parcel of books. Margaret at once retired to her room, and tore open its envelope.

MR. ROSS TO MARGARET PERCIVAL.

"*Jan.* 1, 1850, 11 *P. M.*

"My Dear Miss Percival: —

"I need not say to you, that I have given careful thought and anxious prayer to the questions which you submitted to me this morning.

"I am sure that even your slight acquaintance with America shows you that the state of society, among members of different Christian denominations, is not at all that to which you are used at home.

"Hence your difficulty. It would have occurred to you at home, but for your differences there of classes in society.

"Do not think, of course, that your duty, as a religious

woman, calls upon you to attempt a change, which would only be possible in a different political system.

"But see to yourself. For yourself, you are answerable. You think that your love of our denomination is as warm as ever. Make sure of that affection. This is my first point of advice.

"For others, we all trust here, that, in the midst of the confusions of various sects, 'our scriptural doctrines, and our conservative polity and Liturgy, are more and more commending themselves to the best affections of our people, notwithstanding the ungenial character of the soil on which our Church is planted.'

"If you are steadfast in your own communion, that is what the Lord requires of you.

"Mrs. Ross suggests to me that you will derive satisfaction and receive light from the admirable work of an English lady, which she has put up for me to send with this. Several of our young friends have been deeply interested in it. As I write, it occurs to me that the name, at least, will interest you.

"Believe me, my dear Miss Percival, with prayer that the Spirit may guide you,

"Always your friend and pastor,

"Robert Ross."

Margaret read the letter, and read it again.

"Not the first word," said she, "in answer to my question!

"Yet — yes, — here he speaks of our Church as a 'denomination' among other 'denominations'! That would imply sisterhood. But he expects them all to be converted to our Order.

"Why?

"Because 'our doctrines are Scriptural,'—so they think theirs,—'our polity and Liturgy conservative.' Is that all that can be said for their conversion? Is the distinction between system and system only one of convenience, of expediency? That is Arthur Newstead's theory, and Mr. Wilkie's.

"But what are the books?"

The binding of the two volumes was not familiar to her. It was an American edition. She opened at the title-page, and, to her amazement, read—

MARGARET PERCIVAL;

BY THE

Author of "Amy Herbert," "Gertrude," "Laneton Parsonage," &c. &c.

"Horror of horrors!" cried she, almost laughing at the absurdity, almost crying at the vexation, of the incident.

"Then Mr. Ross does not know that *I* am Margaret Percival!

"The book must be strangely consistent," she added, as she turned over its pages, "if there is anything in it to comfort me; for certainly there are in it some of the injunctions which most distress me, and make me need light most of all."

As she turned over the pages, curious to see the novelty of American type and paper, her eye lighted on these words of Mr. Sutherland,—"There are more minute rules given for the conduct of a Romanist than for ours."

"How well I remember that day!" said Margaret, as she read. The book went on,—

"'And do you not think this desirable?' inquired Margaret.

"'Did you ever see a child in a go-cart?' inquired Mr. Sutherland. 'It is an admirable support; what should you

say if we were to use go-carts all our lives?' Margaret laughed. 'You laugh,' continued her uncle, 'because you see, at once, that we were all designed to run alone. Are you sure that it may not be quite as unwise, as contrary to the order of Providence, to put the mind in a go-cart, as it is to put the body?'

"'The mind is weak, all our life,' said Margaret, — 'the body is not.'

"'Granted, at once; and it should be treated as weak, by having sticks, and props, and outward helps.'"

Margaret read no more. "Those I have had," said she; "just now, they are not quite what I need;" and she glanced at the letter. "Did my uncle mean that, some day, I was to go by myself more than I have done?

"Does God mean it, perhaps, when, in his Providence, he sends my 'natural spiritual adviser' to the end of the earth; and his successor sends me but little *minute* direction?

"'There are more minute rules for the conduct of a Romanist than for ours.' Then we are more designed to run alone. At least, — and best of all is it, — we may read our Bibles for ourselves;" and she opened the dear book, — her uncle's present, so long ago. Her eye fell upon the words, —

"The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord."

CHAPTER XXXV.

CAN the study of Theology be so very intricate?" said Margaret to herself, the next evening, when, retiring from the family circle, she found herself in the solitude of her own room.

How often, how curiously, is this question asked, by those who are just pausing before the luxury of seeing with their own eyes, and hearing with their own ears!

Such a luxury is it! Did any one ever once read the masters of thought, and turn back willingly to the Peter Parley literature of our day?

And who ever read, easily, St. John or St. Paul, in the original, without the feeling that his school labor was all repaid?

When will the time come, when our women, from the study of Latin, shall pass to that of the sacred tongue, — when one may write, "*her* school labor all repaid," — when they shall hear the sacred teachers teaching in their own tongue?

"Can the study of Theology be so very intricate?" said Margaret. "How came it that my uncle terrified me so exceedingly, in those terrible days of Father Andrea?" She turned back to the little address, with which, in those days, he had persuaded her that she must not attempt to study such matters. "Before you can attempt to form an opinion for yourself upon this point, I will tell you the learning which is absolutely required. First, an acquaintance with the works of the great English divines, Taylor, Andrews, Hooker, Hammond, Bull, Beveridge."*

* Margaret Percival, II., 268.

"One, two, three, four, five, six," said Margaret, counting them, in quite bold spirits. "'O!' he went on, 'and very many besides.' Perhaps, in all, as much time required to read them, carefully, as to read Hume, Smollett, Bissett, Macaulay, and Gibbon, as I have done." She read on:

"'Next, a comparison of their statements with those of Bellarmine, Baronius, and the chief Romanist writers.' Say as much time," said Margaret, still bold, "as I have spent in reading the Waverley Novels."

The book continues: — "'Then a perfect knowledge,' — *perfect*," said Margaret, "that is hard for any of us; but he did not mean *perfect*, — 'knowledge of Ecclesiastical history.'

"What is Ecclesiastical history, I wonder?" said she.

"'And, lastly, a long and deep study of the early fathers, — implying, of course, critical learning in the Greek and Latin languages.'"

Margaret winced here. "I shall be tempted to acknowledge that I was right in submitting," she thought; "yet, these fathers must be good reading for a long, rainy day. What did I study Latin for, I wonder?

"How hard poor George must have worked at Oxford! All this necessary for the very beginning of a clergyman's duties in our Church, — before he can fairly regard himself as right in accepting her separation from Rome!

"On the whole, I am glad that we, of the laity, do not have it on our hands."

By this time, she was in a fit of reverie. "As for my Catholic doubts," said she, "dear Uncle Henry's treatment did its work. I was under a false influence at the time. My attachment to the Countess, and my taste or fancy, were ruling my conscience, my judgment, and my faith.

"Perhaps, indeed, the issue turned on the fact, that I loved him more than I did her.

"No matter, — let that go; it was all right. Heavens! how I should have chained myself, if I had stepped backwards into the Dark Ages, and accepted 'the minute rules given for the conduct of the Romanist!'"

Her musings took a more sustained and regular form, as she sat reviewing the day.

At last, she drew her journal to herself, and wrote:

"*Jan.* 2, 1850.

"I am permitted to run more freely by myself.

"*I resolve*, at the beginning of the New Year, that I will study carefully, to see what are 'Apostolic Churches.'

"It seems to me that the question cannot be so intricate as that of the Papal Supremacy.

"As it began with the Reformation, the books must all be in German, Latin, French, Italian, or English; which languages, thank God, a woman now-a-days understands."

With this bold entry on her journal, — what bravery equals that of a journal, at New Year's time? — wholly confident, in her midnight enthusiasm, that she could follow out the course which she aimed at, — remembering, but not converted by, Anna's warning of some weeks before, Margaret went to bed.

"At least," said she to herself, "I shall feel better when I know that I have failed."

Five o'clock, the next morning, found Margaret dressed, and in the library.

She had lighted the library lamp, — had congratulated herself that Mr. Wilkie's taste had collected so many theological books as she knew were here, — and then she began to look fairly round her, wondering where she should begin, and how.

How few of us have learned how to study!

"I shall be at loss, for days," said Margaret; "but I must strike a clew at last. All the more shall I like it, that it is my own."

An irresistible, unaccountable connection of ideas, compared her quest with Mr. Newstead's crusade. "We are, both of us," said she, "wondering how we shall begin.

"The thing to be examined," continued she, beginning, in the novelty of her position as a self-taught student, to regain the excitement of midnight, "is the Apostolic Succession. If, as descended from the Apostles, our ministers have rights and powers which none others have, other churches are not equal to ours.

"I am a member of the Episcopal Church," continued she, — "so I am going to begin with their writers. I will read what they say first. Then let the Dissenters justify their Dissent as they can."

She thought to find reference to some authors in the Encyclopædia. She looked at the word *apostolical*, but there was nothing about the Apostolic Succession there.

So she went to the theological book-case itself. Rather a hap-hazard collection, Mr. Wilkie called it; and poor Margaret's zeal chilled a little, as she read the titles before her.

"Mœhler's Symbolik,"

"Hug's Introduction,"

"Ranke's History of the Popes,"

"Stuart on the Epistle of the Romans,"

were names which she read aloud, as her eye glanced from shelf to shelf. "There must be something here that I want," said she; "but what fairy will tell me what?" Just then her eye caught on "Coleman's Primitive Church."

"Why not that?" quoth Margaret; and she pulled the book down; but caught sight of another title to it: — "A Church without a Bishop."

"Then it is a Dissenter's book," said she; "and I will not begin with it. But perhaps I can find some other referred to, which may be here."

And she sat down with it.

It begins with a letter from the celebrated Neander to the author.

"That's good," said Margaret; "I remember, my uncle told us of Neander." And she wrote Neander's name at the top of the sheets of paper of which she had been making a note-book. "Neander was the man whose lectures he heard at Berlin, — the converted Jew, — the most learned student of Ecclesiastical history in the world.

"And I know Neander's church, the Church of Russia, is apostolical; for it united with ours in sending the Bishop of Jerusalem to Jerusalem."

She read a few lines of what Neander writes, in this letter, to Dr. Coleman.

"What!" said Margaret; and she copied, at the head of her note-book, the following words: —

From Neander's Letter to Dr. Coleman.

"I regard it as one of the remarkable signs of the times, that Christians, separated from each other by land and by sea, by language and government, are becoming more closely united, in the consciousness that they are only different members of one universal Church, grounded and built on the rock Christ Jesus."

Said she to herself, as she read it over, "That is from the most learned Ecclesiastical historian in an Apostolical Church. I never took that idea from my uncle.

"Perhaps I can find some book of this Mr. Neander."

She went again to the book-case.

Sure enough, she had found, on that shelf, a mine of Ecclesiastical history. Before she saw Neander, she lighted on "History of the Church, by Jarvis." She glanced at the title-page, and the preface.

"This is what I want! The history of the Church, by an historiographer appointed by our branch of it. And she turned over the chapters, eagerly, at first, then more carefully, as she was more and more struck with the diligent way in which a faithful student works, at the very foundation of his task. Margaret began to see what faithful study was. Years of life must have been lavished, as she saw, on the essays preliminary to the main object. But the volume ended with the birth of Jesus. She saw it was but a faithful, learned, preparatory volume. She went for its successors, and could not find them.*

"*Waddington's History of the Church.*"

It fell open at a pencil-mark of Mr. Wilkie's, where he had scored the statement, that, in the first instance, and for a short time, the words bishop and presbyter "were used synonymously and indiscriminately, for the same order of persons."

"This must be a Dissenter," said Margaret. No; the book was by Waddington, Dean of Durham.

The table was already piled with these beginnings. Margaret's excited zeal was giving way to a puzzled feeling. She had begun wrong, perhaps. Still, she would not be discouraged by an hour's failure. She would be calmer, before she went on. And she laid by her book, sat gently to quiet herself for a few moments. Then she renewed her studies; and here she was right in seeking light to

* The second volume has not yet appeared.

her soul and mind, and in seeking strength to study withal.

She took her Prayer-book, as the guide to her devotions.

It was a new copy, one which she had never used before. Mr. Wilkie had given her this on New Year's day, — the service as arranged for the Episcopal Church in America. Margaret had always had at hand, before, the copy which she brought from Alton.

As she opened the book, thinking of Mr. Wilkie's kindness in selecting it for her, her eye fell upon the beautiful preface with which the convention who prepared it introduce it, — a statement so much superior to the pretensions of silly or the weakness of narrow minds. Margaret had never read it before, and now she read it carefully, and with deep, serious interest.

At last, she came to the words, —

"When, in the course of Divine Providence, these American States became independent with respect to civil government, their Ecclesiastical independence was necessarily included; and the different religious denominations of Christians in these States were left at full and equal liberty to model and organize *their respective churches*, and forms of worship and discipline, in such manner as they may judge most convenient for their future prosperity, consistently with the constitution and laws of their country."

"'*Their respective churches!*' Then they are *churches!*" cried Margaret. "There can be *churches*, without our sort of Bishops! Anna Wilkie and I need not be separated by fear of schism, or danger of schism! The highest authority in my own dear Church declares it so!"

Could she be right? Was not this the dream springing from some of the more heretical books around her?

No, — it was her own dear Prayer-book, a copy certified

by Dr. Wainwright, under Bishop Onderdonk's appointment.

Never again would she speak of "*The* Church," unless when she meant the great unnumbered body of all Christians; never speak of "the English Church," "the American Church," or "the Scotch Church," unless she meant all in England, Scotland, or America, whom the Spirit had led to "call Jesus their Lord!"

She looked back on the books on the table, with new interest, but with a different feeling. Now, she had a curiosity to indulge, but she had no feeling of rebellion in indulging it.

Her only feeling was surprise, that when the Episcopal Church in America so frankly had recognized the sisterhood and equality of all other denominations, any of her children could use the language Margaret had heard so often, — which she knew ran through her own biography, — which she had detected in fifty places there, of late; — language implying a superiority in her and her institutions, beyond their "convenience for future prosperity."

She read the morning service with a thankful heart. After a few moments, she drew to the table again, and had taken hold once more of Bishop Waddington, when Mr. Wilkie entered the room.

He started at seeing her. "You are earlier than I, Margaret; and that pile of books says that you are at work! Why, I thought, my dear child, that this was to be vacation!"

"Vacation from 'joggafy and the three R's;' — yes, dear sir; but therefore just the time for me to use your books, and help myself; and," continued she, "if every hour of it ends as happily as this first, my vacation work in your library will be happy work indeed!"

"Why, what are you doing, my dear Margaret? The

Encyclopædia Americana, Waddington, Coleman, Dr. Jarvis, — you are deep in Church history; — can you read four books at once?"

"Do not laugh, dear Mr. Wilkie; just now, I am too happy even to laugh, or to be laughed at. Let me tell you what has been on my mind, these weeks back. Let me tell you what has been taken off, in the last hour."

Then Margaret told him, with a clearness of thought and expression which he had not supposed she could command, much of her history of thought and faith. She told him much that he had inferred from what he knew of her, — much that our readers know better than he did.

She told him that, in her girlhood, when religion within her was only a germ, her disposition clung to that vision which represented the members of the Christian Church as forming one family, with altars and homes open to them on every side.* She told him that she had hated to believe this vision a night-dream, — that she had loved to suppose it a reality. She said that, in her hope of finding that reality, she had been attracted, how closely he knew, toward the Roman church, — that the idea of *catholicity* was too beautiful not to attract her. She supposed that the wide spread of its usages, the power which it had over so many lands, was one of its chief charms to her; — that the feeling that her own Church was only the Church of England, one little island, was one reason why she looked for a moment coldly upon its claims.

She told him, in few words, that she had been withdrawn, by the strong arm of her uncle's authority, — partly the authority of a priest, mostly that of a very dear and true friend, she said, —from the temptation to tie her hands in the Roman communion. She had never really regretted that she was

* Margaret Percival, I., 94.

so withdrawn. The mood had changed, in which she had been tempted. Her only sorrow, in regaining the shelter of the Establishment, had been a sense of isolation there. She had lost her vision of the unity of Christians. She had lost there the feeling of one great family of brethren. She had been used to think and to speak of other Christians as if separate from her own body, — if not contemptuously, at least coolly.

In that mood of mind, she came to America, she said. She had chosen it as her new home, for many reasons; — this, chiefly, — that here was a sister branch of her own dear Church. Here she could find an altar and a home.

Here she had found home and altar. But he knew how and where. Her first welcome was from one of the "Reformed Church," in New York; her next, from him, a New England Independent; her best friends, beside, a Quaker, a Moravian, and, — as she spoke of Arthur Newstead, — a "Come-outer." The persons who gave to her her office in the academy, Methodist, Baptist, and Unitarian, appointing her simply because, while she was Christian, she was not of their communion.

He might see, he might have seen, she continued, how all this affected her. How she had begun to think that her dream of the Unity of the Church might be made real to her, by a generous, loving spirit in her own heart, trusting those around her, where she had neglected or distrusted them. She had wondered whether her eyes had not been half closed, so that she saw only as spots of light those points which, when her eyes were open, she found were the salient points of one finished picture. Thus, an old cherished vision had been waking in her heart. It had been to her a renewal of the dearest hope of glorious seventeen. It had come to her at the strangest times, in the most dif-

ferent ways. It had seemed to her as if it were in the very genius of America. It had seemed to her as if America had been trusted by God to teach the reality of that vision to the world.

Only she had had one bar to entertaining this vision. When it was brightest, that bar had come blackest between her and it, so that she might not hug it to her heart. This was, the fear that she was going beyond her sphere, beyond a woman's sphere, beyond the sphere of the laity, in permitting herself to enjoy thus calmly, thus happily, such true fraternity and kindness of Christians of every name. She told him how terribly she had been impressed with the guilt of schism. She said that the recollection of that guilt, of that term, had come before her again and again; — again and again she had asked whether friendship and love were not misleading her into her happy tolerance, — how happy! — as friendship and love had misled her once before. Then she told him how, two days before, she had tried to bring this question to a decision, — of her interview with Mr. Ross, of his answer to her, and so of her effort to settle the question for herself.

"But, after all, dear Mr. Wilkie," cried she, "you and our own dear Church have settled it for me; — to think of your working together, in God's hands! You, who gave me this Prayer-book, and they, the faithful men who made it!" And she read to him the passage where, so simply, they surrender any exclusive claim.

"Now," continued she, cheerfully, "I go on with my reading, if, in my miz-maze of books here, I can ever find where to begin. But I shall read with a stout heart, instead of a trembling one.

"And, perhaps, you will tell me how to begin, and where. You have read these books. What shall I do?"

"Do you think I am your 'natural adviser'?" said he, laughing.

"Surely so," said Margaret, who was less in the mood for laughing, and to whom the question had often suggested itself, before now. "Surely you are. What other, who else, have I? — whom has God given me, to take my dear uncle's place?"

"His exact place, dear Margaret, I shall never fill. I am unlike him; — no one in the world, indeed, sees with another's eyes, or judges with another's opinions. But, pray feel, that if the sincerest affection for you gives any one a claim to your confidence, you may confide in me.

"And, as this matter where you consult me is one which bears, not, indeed, upon religious conviction, but upon theological opinion, pray do me this justice, dear Margaret, to see, that since I have known you, I have not willingly attempted to change one of the theological impressions which you brought with you. You did not know it, but I cautioned the girls, and my wife also, against any such attempt.

"I understood that you were standing on the position, in those matters, in which Providence had placed you, without caring or attempting to improve it. Such freedom from care, such an intention, is a perfectly tenable stand to take; if, of course, it is accompanied by the resolution that one will leave every other Christian in the same Providential position. The moment you invite another to leave his place, that moment you must be prepared to do battle for your own."

"Indeed, indeed, Mr. Wilkie," said Margaret, "I have felt the kindness, the generosity, with which you left me to my own ways. Nothing has so distinctly shown to me, what now seems so easy to me, that the unity of Christ's

kingdom consists, not in uniformity, but in the interlacing and mutual support of parts quite unlike each other to the outward eye."

"As the stones of an arch each sustain the other," said he.

"You will help me read, then?" said Margaret.

"Yes, — and with the same pride in my own convictions, the same interest in yours, as before. I shall not help you to much of the interminable controversy in this matter of the appointment of ministers. I doubt, after all, whether you would be long satisfied with reading which was strung upon so narrow a thread as that would be.

"But I will help you to read some passages of the History of the Kingdom of Christ, which will help you in more ways than one.

"They will show you how absolute is the communion between the saints on earth and those above, — between us, in the house of pilgrimage, and those who have passed through it. They will show, that is, — and it will seem strange to you, at first, — how exactly our difficulties of heart and of faith are the reproductions, in our lives, of the struggles of the best men and women before us.

"Again: your reading, if it is fair, will show you how, while religious conviction flows on, the great Amazon River which buoys up the whole action of the world, the fashions of theological controversy vary from age to age, attracting on the surface much more attention than does the resistless flow beneath them; though the point of debate, two centuries ago, be one hardly spoken of to-day, and that most in fashion now, one which our fathers had never hit upon.

"Ecclesiastical history, or the history of the kingdom of Christ, as read in its original books, or in the books of real learning, and not in the miserable abridgments of the book-

makers, or the frothy fume of the gladiators, is so attractive a study, — so profitable to the heart and conscience, — so inspiring to faith, — that I cannot see why it is pushed by from most libraries and rooms of study. Least of all, do I know why so few women, who have time to read, and are seeking fields for study, enter upon it."

He smiled at his own enthusiasm, and said, "You must have seen, from my books, that this was a favorite theme of mine.

"The books themselves will show you my way of reading. Catholic and Unitarian, Jesuit and Jansenist, Sceptic and Bigot, stand there peacefully, side by side.

"Margaret, it is the only way to read history, — to read both sides. Never trust a book, never hold it in your hand, if the author begins by saying he will be neutral. Throw it instantly into the fire, or out of the window!

"To read the history of our own day, you must read all sides. You must read Whig and Tory papers, — High Church and Low Church pamphlets. The moment a person comes to you, and says he will give you the *juste milieu*, if you will only take his paper or his pamphlet, shun him. He would tell you, as Lafayette said, that two and two make five, if only any ultraist had asserted that two and two make six. But you would not, for that, believe him.

"So, in history, read Lingard, the Catholic historian of England, and John Forster, who stands by the Puritan, and you will be where the men of the Rebellion were, — between two fires. Read a sham treatise, which professes to steer clear of both sides, — and, — poh!

"If you follow my suggestion, then, you will read some very ultra books, on the one side and on the other. You will have to form your own opinion. I do not know, my dear girl, for what else, God gave you ability to do so."

He began to take down and look at some of the books of which he was speaking, — putting marks in them, for her use, as he did so.

"I am so ignorant," said Margaret to him, "that I do not know, on this question of an Apostolic Succession, what the other ground is, from that which our Church sustains."

"O! wait a minute, dear Margaret, and you will see that that question is knit up with fifty others; — you will not read, on it, or any other one question, without opening upon the whole life and history of the particular time which engages you.

"There are, to be sure, volumes, and hundreds of volumes, written on that single subject; — battle-books, hurled between the heads of your literature and the men to whom we Independents, or our fathers, looked up, in the days of fight.

"If you ask me what *I* think, of course, I can tell you."

"Some people do not know what they think," said she, smiling. "Pray, do tell me."

"*I* think, — most Congregationalists think, I suppose, — that Jesus left no direction as to the organization of his followers. Where two or three of them were gathered together, he would be in the midst of them; that was all. He left system to take care of itself. It would vary with government, temperament, and the social condition of the brethren. *He* introduced new life into the world. That life would form its own systems, varying externally, of course, everywhere.

"So we find that, in the Acts and the Epistles, such arrangements are spoken of as the circumstances of different places suggested and required. If we were to count up names of offices in the Church, we should have not merely

your list of 'bishops, priests and deacons,' but 'apostles, bishops, prophets, evangelists, elders, teachers and deacons,' and perhaps others. For instance, there are the seven men, Stephen, Philip, and the rest, appointed to attend to the secular affairs of the large brotherhood at Jerusalem. They have no title given them. It was a body larger than were most of the churches, — it needed peculiar officers. Probably enough, no such persons were appointed anywhere besides.

"Then these names are, several of them, used interchangeably. The passage there, which you show me, with my mark, in Waddington, is simply what every theologian acknowledges: — that, in the language of the New Testament, the modern distinction between bishop, presbyter and deacon, does not absolutely hold. Paul calls himself a deacon.*

"And it appears, also, that at different places, at different times, the duties of the Church were exercised by whoever was present best fitted to exercise. Just as you would be glad to have the bishop marry you, if you could, but would see that the marriage was as valid, if performed by Mr. Ross; so the inhabitants of Crete, who would have been glad to have had an Apostle among them, — one who had seen the Lord, — were satisfied to have the evangelist Titus 'ordain their elders,' since there could not be an Apostle. Paul and Barnabas would have been glad, I suppose, to have been ordained, commissioned to their work, by Apostles, of the very friends of Jesus; but as there were none at Antioch, they accepted the circumstances of the case, and departed none the less boldly to their work, because commissioned only by certain prophets and teachers there.

* Wherefore I was made a minister (διάκονος) according to the gift of the grace of God. Eph. 3: 7.

"In one word, the distinctions of after times were not drawn, — could not have been, when the churches were only little spots of light, planted round the dark shores of the Mediterranean.

"Well! as the century wore along, — as the company of the Apostles departed to their reward, — as around each of the little churches there grew up clusters of churches, — there came in, of course, in that Providence of God which we call the course of affairs, new exigencies, and new provisions for them. Thus, on occasion, several churches would wish to consult as to affairs of mutual interest. The assembly of their delegates chose a Moderator over their assembly. Again, around a large city would grow up little 'meetings' of the faithful, too far removed to attend regularly the ministrations of the central church. They would be glad, however, of the presence of its minister, whenever he could come to them; and he would be still the overseer of their affairs, as much as when he was their immediate pastor. In a University city, on another hand, like Alexandria, the presence of a large body of learned men gave another complexion to affairs. In a Jewish city, again, there would be a likeness to the old management of the synagogues.

"Where, in education and political affairs, the people were used to a share of power, there they would exercise it freely in the churches. Where, in other things, a few men of influence decided the whole, there the churches would fall into a like arrangement.

"This is just what appears to have been the case, in the end of the first, — in the second century, and, indeed, afterwards. Different places saw different customs. Here is my mark in Dr. Doddridge, where he says, —

"'The power of the bishops seems to have prevailed early

in Rome; that of the presbytery, at Alexandria; and at Carthage, such a discipline as comes nearest to what is now called Congregationalists.'*

"Jesus left no system; and, therefore, if you appeal to the Primitive Church, so called, you will find just what we find in our own time, various arrangements suggested by the needs of various communities.

"But I had not meant to deliver to you such a lecture. I had supposed that I could say, in five words, what has taken me five minutes."

Margaret was not unused to long theological discourse in conversation. She told him so, and begged him to go on.

"No!" said he; "I have given you my own opinion as to the Primitive Churches. It is natural, it is right enough, I suppose, that we should look with great deference to their habits and arrangements. But, there, let me say, dear Margaret, that I do not believe that God has so deserted his world, but that any of us has just as vivid light from him, just as noble opportunities, as had any Clement or Augustine of them all. I believe that any one of us has that; and that, besides that, we all have the additional advantage of the results of the prayer, the study, and the action, of the Holy Spirit, through eighteen long centuries.

"Now, read these books on the extreme other side, and you will see that there is a very different line of opinion. I cannot tell how it happens. I cannot conceive of it. But there it is, and you shall judge of it.

"If you come out where I have come out, you will believe that where two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ, his Spirit is in the midst of them; and that, beyond that presence, there is nothing more to be asked or expected.

* Lectures, II., 354.

"To use Mr. Newstead's favorite expression, all beside is matter of language. Their orders, forms, arrangements, will be couched in the way most expressive to them. God's Providence will arrange that way, as it arranges any of the expressions of their spoken speech, fitly, though various, for every time. That is what *I* believe."

Mr. Wilkie proceeded to give Margaret some brief hints as to what the different books were which she could refer to; — Romanist, French and German Protestants, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and "Come-outer."

"Depend upon it, my dear girl, if you read every day, as you have read to-day, — beginning with a faithful prayer for light, — you will read with profit.

"Only, I think that you will soon be amused to remember that you began with inquiry as to a form. You will be so much more interested in the hearts, hopes and doubts, — souls and lives, — the struggles, temptations and dangers, of the glorious army that has gone before us."

He marked, on her list, long books, hard books, original books. There was not a digest nor abridgment among them all.

"Always read the originals, Margaret, if you can.

"A warmed-over dinner has a good many flavors, which you would not have detected in its originals."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Without printing a "Sequel to Margaret Percival in America," we should find it hard to describe the steps of her interest in her new course of reading. It was well that it began in a vacation. Afterwards, she found in it pleasant employment for perhaps two hours a day, — one in the morning early, and one at night, at Wilton. And Mr. Ross told her, one day, and Mr. Harrod afterwards confirmed it, that there are very few active professional men who are able to give so much daily time as that to thorough professional study.

At first, Margaret found herself tired, at times, and lost. Often she was surprised to see that pages were spent on questions of whose value she could not gain any idea. But she made this, in the end, a lesson to her of the childishness of men's habits of controversy, when even the deepest points should be involved.

On the whole, the mental discipline and the soul-training of this work proved a great advantage to her. In the midst of dry plodding, she would come out on an outburst of hearty, earnest, living devotion, which must have been written with the poor author's tears flowing over the pages. And then Margaret's heart would warm again towards those old noblemen of thought; — they seemed so very near to her, that the centuries between wholly rolled away.

More good did it do her, that these accounts of struggles, hopes and fears, took her, so often, from herself, and from a morbid habit of analyzing too closely her own life. Sometimes she found the very parallel, in Carthage or Alexandria, centuries since, of what she had thought, in her own

life, a wholly unheard of trial. Then she found strains and tortures such as she had not conceived of, — beyond her own entirely; so that any experience of hers sunk to nothing in the comparison.

Best of all was the sense, which forced itself upon her, of the integrity, the real heart, of these men whom she was reading. There was hardly one of them, — if there were one, — Pelagian, Semi-Pelagian, Athanasian, Arian, Heretic or Catholic, in whom, when Margaret came home to his own life, she did not find, as the first element, an earnest effort, an humble waiting upon God, which charmed her, and commanded her reverence.

She asked Mr. Wilkie how this was. And he told her that the selfish men had not been able to keep their heads above the waves of so many centuries; — that few men had ever had power to form opinion in the Church, who had not prayed and believed, — who had not wrought with an effort to gain the highest power, somehow, in their labors.

More and more, therefore, did Margaret's reading, of many months, bring her to see and believe that it is one God which worketh all in all; — to reverence his power of commissioning servants so different, in creeds so wide, in languages so unlike, to his one work of uniting the world, — not into a unit, — but into a brotherhood of love.

One day, as the spring approached, this feeling grew so strongly upon Margaret, that she felt that it would be unsisterly not to express it to George, though she felt how much it would pain him. For she remembered the very different feeling she had, in the days when they were together, — the days before he was ordained, of her printed biography.

After writing to him a letter, which was but an "outside letter," — a letter, which, as somebody said to somebody,

might have been pasted upon a bulletin-board, — she went on: —

"Dear George, — you see that all this about the village and the school is not really what I have at heart. Do not be shocked, but I must make to you *a confession.*

"You know how exclusive a 'Churchwoman' I came here. Dear George, I cannot use that word as I used to. I cannot feel that our dear Church is the only Church, — nay, that I have any right to call it the best Church. It is one among sisters. George, won't you forgive me for thinking so? I cannot feel, I do not feel, that these kind friends, — that the Wilkie family, of which I wrote you, — that that Moravian minister, — that, — oh! you know how many diversities of worship there are, — I cannot feel, as I once felt, that these people endanger themselves at all. They love their forms, as we love ours. And, — George, — surely God *is;* — He is with us now. Can it be, that, if there were any danger in worshipping him in forms so wide, an immense land, like this, would be given over to that danger, — left to be settled by this very Independency; — left now, in all its West, to be enlightened by the simplicity and heart of those Methodist preachers, if they led to danger and schism in religion?

"George, I shall always be an Episcopalian! But I know Anna never will be, nor Gertrude, nor Hester, nor one in ten of my friends here. And what I feel, — what *I know*, — is, that it makes no difference whether they are, or are not. They enlarge their lives by God's spirit, — they help me enlarge mine. *That*, each in her way, is what we are trying for; and, George, I *know*, as I know God is, that, if we keep on trying, we shall help each other in heaven.

"Do not be dreadfully pained. I am not afraid to write

this, because you are my own dear brother. I am happier since I have felt this. I am stronger. The highest authority of the Episcopal Church here permits the feeling; and I hope to see the day when all Christians shall leave any quarrels about forms, to keep thus the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

"You will write kindly to me, won't you, George? Do not forget that Margaret would not have written this to you without prayer, — without feeling sure she was right, — and that she never will have one secret from you.

"Why, George, you cannot think how many signs of this coming unity in diversity we see here. We are to take a sleigh-ride to-morrow to a village called Mons Christi, where there are every sort of people, all living in this catholic love, with one minister and one church, — a foretaste of what shall be in the larger world. We are to go and see this Reverend Mr. Evelyn, and his wife, Margaret, if we can only find the way there.

"This is the reason I write the day before packet day. The Wilkies tried to go last winter, but could not find the place. We go while the snow lasts, because the ride is so much easier.

"So, good-by, George! You will write to me kindly, I know. Do not write hastily.

"And pray do not pity me!

"For I am happier than I ever was; — and always your loving sister, MARGARET."

As it happened, Margaret need not have been so anxious about her letter to George.

The packet passed on the ocean the mail-packet from England which had one from him on board, in which he said: —

"I send you some books, dear Margaret; read them carefully. They are not such as we read at dear Uncle Henry's knee; but they are such as our men are writing to-day, as, one by one, they swing back from Newmanism.

"Here are, FRANCIS W. NEWMAN on the Soul: her Sorrows and Aspirations;

"J. A. FROUDE's Nemesis of Faith: the book which was made notorious, beyond its intrinsic worth, because the authorities burned it at college;

"And FRANCIS NEWMAN's Phases of Faith.

"Do not, dear Margaret, accept any desolate notions from them. Do not think I do. Do not take an opinion from them because it is in them; but let them make you think, and develop your own. Most of all, in truth, do I send them to you, that you may not be surprised to hear that your dear brother George, whom you educated, dear Margaret, for the ministry of our own Established Church, should feel, now, that we used to limit quite too much God's ways of acting. Margaret, if you hear that I have given up my cure, do not think I have given up my faith. Only think that it has grown brighter and wider; and let these little books that I send you show you that, in the midst of us here, is an influence, whose voices, I think, are still crude and stammering; — but to which, dear Margaret, God helping us, we will, in the end, give a voice and a life which shall break down all walls of division, and show to all angels the reünited army, of the various companies, in various uniforms, with various arms, of the great army of the Living God!

"Dear Margaret, you will love me more than ever, if that could be, now that I give you this idea of the trials of feeling I have gone through. But do not think I am faithless,

or cold, or that I have not more heart for the ministry of Christ than I ever had before.

"And so, God bless you and yours, ever.

"GEORGE."

"God be praised!" said Margaret, "God be praised!" She read the letter again and again; and hardly a day passes, that she does not take it from its hiding-place, to look upon its manly words.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IT was spring, — a most lovely morning of blossom-snowing spring. Gertrude stood at the long window that looked upon the lawn at Elmwood. With her was Eliza Spenser. They were watching Agnes and Lizzie, who were planting seeds in the garden border.

"Another year," said Gertrude, "has passed away! With me there has been such a change as has passed over trees and flowers. There has been a decay of the old way of life; then a dead, dreary winter, without hope, without faith. Alas! I had no pure snow garment wherewith I might clothe the deadness and barrenness of my heart! Then came the spring, — new hopefulness and elasticity. What will another year bring forward? Another winter, — more dreariness?"

"O, do not say so!" said Eliza; "do not let us venture to look forward with such a thought! Indeed, the sight of the present, with all its duties and calls, is quite as much as I can bear to see!"

"Last spring, I felt very strong, in my own power. In

the summer, came my illness, that showed me my weakness. Then it was I read of Margaret Percival. I was attracted by her eagerness and earnestness. I fancied, too, she had found repose, — a faith that she could dwell in, — a way of life that was plain, and easy, and happy. I see, now, what Anna meant, when she said she thought Margaret Percival was not a person to be happy under constraint. She has an independent spirit, that is striving to be free."

"And yet, during her life in England, she seemed anxious to follow the lead of others."

"But I believe she would have freed herself, if it had not been for the interposition of others. For instance, had she been left to herself, I do not believe she would ever have become a Roman Catholic. She believes that it was her Uncle Sutherland that saved her from such a step, — such a sin, as she considers it. Would it not have been happier for her, if she could have worked her own way through? What a sad restraint, indeed, it was, to transfer her faith merely from Father Andrea to her Uncle Sutherland! But I forget you have not seen Margaret Percival, and have not the new feeling of personal friendship to add to the little interest that arose from reading the book of her life."

"What you have said to me of her, since I have been with you, has given me a fresher interest in her than the book gave me."

"It is the seeing Margaret Percival in America that has awakened me to the mistakes in her education. Hers is an active, inquiring spirit, that has been bound down into dependence. Now that it has been necessary for her to break away from these supports, I see her weak, uncertain where to turn. She has lost her habit of judgment, though she has such natural strength of mind. In myself, I can see the evil of another extreme. As I have said to you, I

was sadly dependent upon myself, formerly. The last year has taught me how much I need the strength that I can draw from others. How many different persons have this year helped to influence me! The joyous, happy home of the Wilkies gave me so much strength and encouragement! It was in a Catholic church I breathed the first true prayer my heart ever formed. It was too unutterable for words, yet I felt it mount upwards towards God. It was at Aunt Clara's death-bed that there came to me a visiting of true faith, the hope of a truer life. And all around me has been breathing the influence of Anna's upright and strong character. She bears within her the source of cheerfulness and of strength. With her, life is not merely to do nobly, but to *be* pure and holy, strong in herself and for others! Margaret Percival's energy, too, awakened me, or helped to rouse me. My image of her, as I read of her, was as of the statue of some saint, standing with arms across her breast, immovable."

"I do not think I love the saints, if they are so immovable."

"We are more excited, more inspired, by a character that is constantly growing. This I have learned lately, and I am not sure but it is true, what Mr. Murray said, the other day, that there is more glory in the stamp of 'faciebat' than of 'fecit.' In the one, there is promise of something to come. There is this glory in beginning anything, — I used to long to finish something."

"Helen Pearson said, the other day, to me, in speaking of my wedding-day, 'That will be the *end* of you.' It sounded very strangely to me, for I have always looked upon it as a fresh beginning. All my life long I have been merely vegetating. Lately I have had opened to me a new way of life, and I am rejoiced that there comes this new era to

strengthen my fresh resolutions. When I enter our little cottage home here, with my marriage vow fresh upon my lips, how earnestly shall I promise myself to keep from it all that shall stand in the way of a Christian life! That new home! How earnestly shall I consecrate it to holy works and thoughts!"

"I remember Mr. Wilkie, as we came home from Baltimore, spoke to me of the enthusiasm of new converts. I think he feared, when the newness of my resolutions should pass away, my zeal would grow cold. He said that this fresh enthusiasm we ought to allow every new day and hour to awaken; — that the variety of opportunities offered us helped to do this. Our observance of Sunday is a great help. It might be to each of us a new consecration of ourselves to God. There is, besides, the new birth of nature in spring, the solemnity of its decay in autumn, and the rising of the sun each day. With you, there is indeed a new era! How much, too, we can do for each other, to influence one another! I have to thank the year for a better knowledge and appreciation of you."

"It was my fault that we did not know each other better. I had heard so much of you, that I was afraid of you, and so I could not express what little there was in me that might attract you. And now, how much we have to thank you for, and Mr. Ashton! Mr. Murray is very grateful to Mr. Ashton for his helping hand. And then, to you we owe the discovery of our little cottage so near you!"

"Don't speak to me of gratitude, Eliza, for you remind me of the duties that you took up, which I neglected. Agnes and Lizzie were my sisters, but you were sisterly towards them. I shall be constantly running down the avenue with the children. We shall burst in upon you,

and interrupt all your nicely laid plans for housekeeping!"

"Ah, yes, you will give me a new impulse, and a new life, that will rouse me, and break up the formality, the regularity, of my ways. But what can I do for you?"

"I have been leading such a sad, chaotic life! I have begun so many things, and finished nothing! You shall help me in these beginnings. You shall bring order into my tangled maze. You must teach me to have more fixed hours of study. Indeed, Eliza, there is no end to the good we may do each other.

"Did I tell you that Cornelia Lester was to become a Sister of Charity? How different are our ways of life! Perhaps that may, indeed, be the true life for her. She had an exalted, enthusiastic way of thinking and acting; and she found little sympathy, in this, in those around her."

"Agnes and Lizzie are talking as earnestly as we have been. Now they are approaching the house."

"They are earnest about their seeds; — a few weeks will decide the fate of their flowers. We have this life and another to await our ripening."

"But Margaret Percival! Will her American life change her form of belief?"

"I think not. I doubt if she would be happier, now, in any different form of belief. Her associations are woven in so strongly with this, that she would not be happy to remove herself from them."

"And is there any probability of her marrying Arthur Newstead?"

"I should have thought it impossible, a little while ago. It would create a great change in the way of life

of each. Margaret would have much more to suffer, before she could decide upon such a step. It would truly be a new beginning in life for her. Far from Helen Pearson's idea, marriage would be a beginning, rather than

THE END OF MARGARET PERCIVAL."